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OTHERS TO ADORN

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# OTHERS TO ADORN

by

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

Preface by W. B. YEATS

Forewords by

A. E. [GEORGE RUSSELL]

and

HORACE REYNOLDS

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## INVOCATION

RICHARD CAMPBELL	}	COME ON!
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DAVID MORTON		
HORACE REYNOLDS		



## P R E F A C E

[From Yeats's Introduction to the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, 1892-1935. Oxford Clarendon Press. Section V, page xv.]

"Twelve years ago Oliver Gogarty was captured by his enemies, imprisoned in a deserted house on the edge of the Liffey with every prospect of death. Pleading a natural necessity he got into the garden, plunged under a shower of revolver bullets and as he swam the ice-cold December stream promised it, should it land him in safety, two swans. I was present when he fulfilled that vow. His poetry fits the incident, a gay, stoical—no, I will not withhold the word—heroic song. Irish by tradition and many ancestors, I love, though I have nothing to offer but the philosophy they deride, swashbucklers, horsemen, swift indifferent men; yet I do not think that is the sole reason, good reason though it is, why I gave him considerable space, and think him one of the great lyric poets of our age."

## THE POETRY OF MY FRIEND

WHEN I was young I thought of my opposites with terror, but as I grew older I transcended those hatreds, because, I hope, my mood became more spiritual. I came to feel the attraction in opposites, not that I wished to be like them but to understand them, to establish some harmony or balance between them and myself. I found this inclination in others more spiritual than myself. Emerson, who could not, I think, have brought his lips to utter a Rabelaisian sentence, does twice in his journal refer almost with envy to the Rabelaisian freedom of speech of the lumbermen. This attraction to opposites may have its roots in a purely spiritual impulse to have life in all fullness, and it may have been the same impulse which made him write to Whitman telling the poet what joy he took in his free and brave thought. I found myself liking Oliver Gogarty when I knew him only as having the wildest wit in Ireland from which nothing in heaven or earth was immune, though often I had reverence for the things he assailed. I never suspected in that rich nature a poet lay hidden, though my intuition should have told me that at the root of all friendships and desires are hidden identities. For all his rich vitality the elements obvious in it seemed incongruous with delicate

poetry. An athlete in his youth, an airman in later life, his mind thronged with the knowledge and technique of a specialist, his imagination brimful of Rabelaisian fantasy and that wild wit which in every poet but Heine has made timid the sensitive psyche.

All this was not congruous with poetry. But, among the multitudes he contained, there was a poet, a genie in the innermost who gradually emerged in spite of all the dragons in its path. I was astonished when he began to show us verses so finely carved that his genie seemed to have wrought with words as the Image-maker in his own verse treated the hard jade, making a transient beauty into adamant. It is easier to suggest a lovely transience than to carve it in definite forms. Monticelli in the blurred jewelry of his woodland could make glimmer a white arm, a gleaming neck, a gesture, a mothlike flutter of drapery, and leave it to our imagination to create the full riot of lovely life.

But the ideal of Oliver's genie was beauty and mystery achieved by precision. His beauty must shine in the sun not in a shade, and its mystery must be its own perfection. That I think is his genie's true intent in its art; but, when it consorts with the crowd of lusty incompatibles in the house of the soul, it is often deflected and becomes witty with the rest, or it listens to scandal and forgets for a time its own ideal. But I always assume that what is best is most real and I find what is best in lovely poems like *The Plum Tree by the House* in which the genie reveals to

the poet the manner of its own artistry, to hold fast to the image, to brood on its beauty until it becomes what it contemplates and is itself a blossoming tree. It is not the secret of such art as I have myself, for my genie would melt all forms into bodiless spirit. It looks with wonder on its opposite whose art is to project defined and shapely images and which gets its life from this art. That precise carving in words is in the first poem in this book, where the crab tree grows in the imagination with its stiff, twisted beauty, and, as we read, it becomes as sturdy a dweller in memory as its prototype in earth. Again in the *Coin from Syracuse* how determined the genie is to miss nothing of the hard drawing of the beauty it sees until the features

“Crowned with the thickly rolled  
And corrugated gold”

are built anew in fancy with the curious hands

“lost  
On the sweet Asian coast”

and then we know at last it was some Irish beauty had started the genie on its interpretation of the ancient image, some one

“Come of the old stock,  
Lords of the limestone rock,  
And acres fit to breed  
Many a likely steed,

Straight in the back and bone  
With head high like her own,  
And blood that, tamed and mild,  
Can suddenly grow wild."

When I was young and saw a face that set me dreaming I tried to track it back to the Pleroma, the fountain of all beauty, to find justification for my adoration. I had not then found in Emerson the wisdom which justifies the image-maker—

"Tell them, dear, if eyes were made for seeing,  
That beauty is its own excuse for being,"

and I have become less timid and more gallant in my thought, accepting beauties not in my own hierarchy, and am happier being able to escape from myself and to see with the delighted, unfearing eyes of a poet who is my opposite.

Oliver Gogarty has eyes which can see what is most enchanting and alluring in women. He casts a glamour over them, the art which Gainsborough had in painting and which Reynolds, for all his mastery of his craft, had not. How few poets convey to us the enchantment of the women they adored. Their love blurs their art. I doubt if Oliver was in love with any of the women he praises, but, as we read, we feel that we could easily fall in love with the woman he depicts. His cool eye has noticed that second of illumination where the light on limb and dress becomes one with the light in the heart, and

he can have no peace until he can give that transience permanence—

“till the cloud  
Of thought takes definite shape,  
And bodies it forth unbowed,  
Tall, on a bare landscape,  
Where earth the stone upthrusts—  
Holding your exquisite frock  
Against the morning gusts,  
And light is on half the rock.”

That is a beauty seen and drawn with precision enough to make it alluring to us. I sometimes think of Herrick after I have read one of Oliver Gogarty's lyrics. The Julia of the English poet is a lovely piece of girlhood. That is much, but she will never be more to our imagination. There is some aristocracy of vision in the Irish poet. He sees the lovely girl, but he suggests, however remotely, the psyche within the flesh. In an instant, she might be transfigured in the imagination and become the dream stuff out of which goddesses, naiads and nymphs were fashioned. That is, the images he depicts, however modern in outward fashion, are still in the divine procession and set us travelling with them to

“The Perfect, the Forbidden City,  
That's built—Ah, God knows where.”

From practice the art of the poet, at first a little stiff, has become supple, and the words will fly up

wiftly to catch a sudden glory in their net. This must have come almost as swiftly as the vision it speaks of:

“I gaze and gaze when I behold  
The meadows springing green and gold.  
I gaze until my mind is naught  
But wonderful and wordless thought!  
Till, suddenly, surpassing wit,  
Spontaneous meadows spring in it:  
And I am but a glass between  
Un-walked in meadows, gold and green.”

I take so much pleasure in my friends' poetry because it is the opposite to my own. It gives to me some gay and gallant life which was not in my own birthright. He is never the professional poet made dull by the dignity of recognised genius. He has never made a business of beauty: and, because he is disinterested in his dealings with it, the Muse has gone with him on his walks and revealed to him some airs and graces she kept secret from other lovers who were too shy or too awed by her to laugh and be natural in her presence.

A. E.

# GOGARTY IN THE FLESH

BY HORACE REYNOLDS

I FIRST met Oliver Gogarty in George Moore's *Salve* where he is introduced as Dublin's arch-mocker, the author of the limericks that are on the lips of all Dublin. And in Dublin, most vocal of all cities, where talk is the national art and pastime, it means much to be the crowned arch-ollave of joke and jest. In *Salve* the wicket of Moore's garden clangs, and Gogarty makes his gay entrance fanfared by Moore who cries out in welcome Gogarty's motif, "There was a young man of St. John's," the first line of one of the great limericks, slyly leaving the following lines to our curiosity, and thus confounds the censor, for much of Gogarty's wit necessarily bubbles in secret springs. But he gives complete Gogarty's improvisation on Sir Thornley Stoker, the Dublin surgeon, whose excursions into the suburbs of art were made possible by his skill with the scalpel, his antiquarian touch turning a cancer into a Chippendale sofa or a floating kidney into a Ming Cloisonné. And with the laughter that his sallies arouse in Moore's dinner guests Gogarty fades out of the Trilogy, a beautifully realised minor character.

My curiosity was excited. A. E. and John Eglinton, Moore's other guests, were identifiable, but who was



this man whose volatile and grotesque name seemed the mirror of his mind? Like Max Beerbohm in *Enoch Soames*, I went unrewarded to the index of a literary history, Ernest Boyd's *Ireland's Literary Renaissance*, a book that had stood me in good stead in my first flirtings with the literature of the Renaissance. Evidently Boyd in his perhaps too earnest quest for the meaning of Ireland's literature had had no time for personalities: he had been interested only in the written, not the spoken, word. Finally in my copy of *Dana*, a rare early journal, I found printed some of Gogarty's lyrics—the Goddess speaking where the critic was mute—and fresh surprise was added to my already aroused curiosity: this man whose wit was as Gothic as a gargoyle wrote lyrics cool and fresh as a fountain, and as delicate as a beautiful change of light.

Later when *Ulysses* fell into my hands, and it was whispered to me that Gogarty was in it, I recognised him in "stately, plump Buck Mulligan" who comes "from the stairhead bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed" to open that tragedy of the unconscious, although Gogarty is not plump, and stately, perhaps, only in repose. There in that book without reticences Gogarty piled imagination upon imagination with breath-taking invention, and I knew enough of Joyce's marvellous phonographic ear and photographic eye to know that much of it was but Gogarty printed, and I marvelled anew.

Three years passed, and it so happened that each year I met an Irish poet who had known Gogarty: Joseph Campbell, James Stephens, and Padraic Colum passed in succession through the city in which I lived, and from each I gleaned something of the famous Dublin doctor. To ask of him was to evoke a legend: his name was open sesame to the treasure-house of Gogartiana in which each one who knew him seemed to have a full share. "He does not belong to our spindling, self-nauseated age," cried Campbell; "he is a Buck of the robust, devil-may-care 18th century, born out of time to our delight," Campbell's slower, Northern blood standing momentarily still in homage before the memory of a mind which was lightning. And then to illustrate the quickness of Gogarty's wit he told how as a young poet he had walked down Grafton Street one day, proud of a new, very bright red tie. Suddenly he came face to face with Gogarty. "Tiger! Tiger! burning bright," cried Gogarty instantly, passing on with a swift smile and a bright nod. And I shall never forget Stephens' praise of one of Gogarty's poems, *To a Cock*, in a series of mounting phrases which exploded like a rocket in a vehement "By God, 'tis tragic!" while we all looked at each other in wild surprise. Colum told us of Gogarty's adventures before he had hung up his tankard in stories which ranged from his pilgrimage to the top of the Feather-bed Mountain to restore the snakes to Ireland to his offering of the swans to the Liffey, a gesture of

gratitude to that river which, when he had been taken out by a group of Republicans to be shot, had offered him the opportunity to escape with his life. We gasped at the audacity of those stories in which man revenges himself on those two great barriers that lie athwart the highway of the mind and keep it active—sex and religion. Our pulses beat to the limericks that immortalise in oral tradition such oddly assorted personalities as the King in Sing a Song of Sixpence; Miss Horniman, patron saint of the Abbey Theatre; and Daniel O’Connell, the Irish patriot. We applauded the skill of the parodies that transubstantiates sound and senses as skilfully as Joyce, with that passion for phonetic waggery which is so large a part of *Ulysses* and the Irish mind, turned *Oliver Gogarty* into *Malachi Mulligan*, keeping the two dancing dactyls and the clash of race and mood in given name and surname. And I shall always remember one occasion in particular which Gogarty ruled superbly by proxy, transforming what might well have been just another dinner into an evening of almost Dublin brilliance. Among others, Colum was there, and Maurice Joy, once secretary to Sir Horace Plunkett, and a friend of Gogarty’s youth. Scarcely had we seated ourselves when someone spoke of Gogarty, and then Colum and Joy began an antiphony of Gogartian reminiscences; first one, then the other, would remember one of Gogarty’s limericks, stories, or parodies, and these quotations intoxicated, like a succession of

drinks. Then when we were all a little giddy with excitement and delight, Joy arose to recite Gogarty's *The Death of Diogenes, the Doctor's Dog*, which is both a lampoon on the tongue-tied, king-loving Professor Mahaffy and a parody of Swinburne, written, when Gogarty was an undergraduate at Trinity, in the quintains that close the *Atalanta in Calydon*. I can hear Joy now chanting the lines that Mahaffy speaks over the body of the dog which had died on the voyage from Greece to Ireland, a hound especially prized because it had been given him by the niece of the King of Greece:

As I wambled awound  
On the gwound that was Gweece  
I was given that hound  
By the King's little niece,  
And had rather be fined e'er I found him to  
gaze on his saddest surcease.

And then the Chorus of Scholars in the house comments gravely on the action, with a deeper tone, *adagio pesante*:

He was given that hound  
By the seed of a King  
For the wisdom profound  
Of his wide wandering.  
But was it the owner, or donor, or dog that  
was led by a string?

As Joy spoke the last words of this threnody I made my vow. I would make a pilgrimage to Dublin. I had not seen Shelley plain, but I would at least catch a glimpse of Gogarty in the flesh.

Two months later I found myself one afternoon before a door in which was set a large silver plate bearing the name *Oliver St. John Gogarty, M.D.* Before ringing the bell, I looked about me. This was a moment of which I had long dreamed; it was not to be hurried over; I wanted to squeeze every possible value out of it, roll it around in the mouth, taste it to the full. At last I was in Ely Place. Across the street was the row of houses from the windows of one of which, Number 4, George Moore, surrounded by his Monets and Manets and lovingly treading his Aubusson carpet, had looked forth and seen the copy for his masterpiece, *Hail and Farewell*. At the end of the street rose the often-spoken-of convent wall, for Ely Place is a cul-de-sac; between it and Gogarty's house stretched the sunken garden through the wicket of which Gogarty had first walked into my mind. There was the largest apple tree in all Ireland under which Moore, an Ovid among his friends, had dined; there was the damson tree, "coral boughs in light inurned," of which Gogarty himself was later to sing in one of his most beautiful lyrics.

I rang the bell, I waited, I was ushered into the house, I was conducted to the drawing-room. Dr. Gogarty was engaged with a patient. And as I waited for him, I chatted with Mrs. Gogarty and some com-

pany. Mrs. Gogarty politely asked me about my stay in Ireland, and I summarised my trip up from Queenstown by way of Killarney to Dublin, mentioning, apropos of something I have now forgotten, that Muckross Abbey was the most beautiful ruin I had seen in Ireland.

“Ah, you should see ——— ———,” said a gay, joyous voice behind me, speaking of a famous Irish woman to whose beauty time has not been kind, and I turned to see coming toward me, eyes laughing, step quick, all smile and gaiety and good spirits, a very young middle-aged man—Oliver St. John Gogarty in the flesh. I knew at once that I should like him much; in fact I already loved him for that entrance, with its flash of the precious power to perceive the hidden nearness of analogies seemingly distant until the imagination has discovered their essential closeness, a power that has given his friends many surprises and much pleasure. It was perfect, that entrance, well worth coming three thousand miles to see and hear.

We admired Gogarty's new Danish furniture purchased in Paris at the recent exhibition. Unlike Sir Thornley Stoker, Gogarty esteems the new, the fresh, the modern. President Cosgrave came in, a quiet, sober man who—unlike most Irishmen—did not want the centre of the stage. He talked little, and, I fear, I listened less. What were presidents to me? I sat finally in the presence of the man who had restored the snakes to Ireland; the author of the

great limericks; the creator of that robustious company, Fresh Nelly, Mrs. Mack, Rosalie the Coal-Quay Whore, and the heroic and Rabelaisian Bryan O'Lynn; the cunning "makaris" of the cleverest parody in English literature in which Gogarty flashes back to Keats, "Silent, upon a peak in Darien," "Potent, behind a cart with Mary Ann"—certainly the most joyously witty man in all Europe.

And as if he sensed my three-thousand-mile expectancy, Dr. Gogarty talked brilliantly, telling story after story with the ejaculatory running comment and extemporaneous exegesis of anecdote and phrase which are his habit, as is his raised finger, shaken Puck-like close to the ear. I believe he is the only man in the world who can explain his own jokes and make them funnier thereby, I thought, studying him as he talked.

Youth is the first impression one gets from Gogarty in the flesh—all the Irish seem youthful, but Gogarty is particularly so; youth, and the responsiveness of mind and body that is its privilege. He is a man whose energy makes him restless, whose culture and information are rich and abundant, close to the tip of his tongue, ready for instant mobilisation in the face of opening, invitation, or attack. His is a mind whose surfaces are intensely active, but whose depths are seldom stirred; a fluent, ready mind, flaring up easily into images and analogies, expressing itself from the surface, never pulling an idea up by its

roots, never working against resistance; a mind that plays like a fine old violin, from which tone comes singingly.

At seven o'clock the next morning—this in a city where the shops do not open until ten—Gogarty was at the door of my hotel with a small car, and we drove out into the beautiful Dublin hills. The small roadster had no brakes, and we slithered down the steep wet hills around which the road curved in dangerous spirals. Driving under those circumstances would have absorbed all my attention but not Gogarty's. For him it was only stimulation. All the while Gogarty gave me his memories of the poets, Greek, Latin, Scotch, English, and Irish, reciting whole ballads while we slid over the wet hills, ballads ranging from Robin Hood to an eighteenth-century folk ballad picked up by Joyce in Mabbot Street. Through Powerscourt Demesne we tore, finally coming to a stop in a beautiful quiet glade surrounded by old trees and backed by a high cliff down which a waterfall fell in thin hairs of silver. There we got out. Were Gogarty's spirits quieted by the gentle genius of this place? Not at all. At his command we ran foot races to restore circulation, and Gogarty bested me by no mean margin in the standing broad jump, and he would have easily bested a better man than I. Then back to the car, I breathless, but Gogarty unwinded, and then a drive to the lodge of a house where I was to have luncheon. There he left me exhausted in mind and body, while



he, with a gay wave of the hand, sped on his way back to Dublin, as fresh and unwearied as when we had set out five hours before.

The next morning at the same hour Gogarty was again at the door of my hotel; this time we were to go horseback riding. As we rode our cobs slowly through the almost deserted Dublin streets on our way to the Strand, we passed the house where Joyce used to lodge, and the sight of it loosed Gogarty's memories of the author of *Ulysses*. He paid tribute to Joyce's marvellous memory; he spoke of his beautiful tenor voice, even more beautiful than McCormack's; and, of course, of *Ulysses*, which he compared to "an elbow of a broken statue which is the town of Dublin". I remembered that to George Moore Dublin was an old second-hand clothes shop, and suggested that if we combined the two images, clothing one with the other, we'd have a museum scarecrow, a bit of foolish fancy that Gogarty generously rewarded with the high, suspiratory "Lovely!" which is the highest mark of his appreciation.

Soon we were on the Strand and off for a fine gallop around the crescent-shaped beach which fringes the east of Dublin as the mountains fence the west and south. The thunder of eight hooves on wet sand was as joyous as Gogarty's galloping wit, for unlike Joyce, whose wit depresses and saddens, Gogarty is as exhilarating as a gay band playing spiritedly in four-four time in the morning sunshine. Joyce

believes in nothing outside himself; consequently he can never rid self of self; he is devoured by the swarm of his ideas, and yet he feeds on them, and on them alone, and thus the heart-withering circle closes, shutting out the vistas that free man from unhappiness. Gogarty believes in the magnificent adventure of life which, like Taillefer, he charges with ardour, juggling his sword, a feather in his cap, a song on his lips.

And then one week-end we set off to the West. To drive with Gogarty in his small roadster had been a terrifying experience, but when I saw before his door the shell-shaped Mercedes in which we were to make our dash to the West, all yellow hood and mahogany trimmings, shiningly sinister—when I imagined the potential power that now lay quiet under that hood, I shuddered. The John McCormacks stopped in unexpectedly for tea—the tenor, wife, and daughter—and that delayed us, so it was after six when we started.

All my life I had lived in what we think of as a speed-crazed country. I had seen my share of the speed that is born of gasoline and gin, but never had I had such a ride. Gogarty had said, "You'll see the country". Well I did, in blurs. Getting out of Dublin, the motor coughed and spit. "It doesn't run well under fifty," said Gogarty apologetically; "I have to drive it on the brake." Driving on the brake consisted of seventy to eighty miles an hour down the straight-aways of the very narrow, very curving, but very

smooth Irish roads; at the curves, foot raised from accelerator, a consequent checking of our terrific speed, an anxious peering around the bend and a prayer that we might not find there in the road before us a peasant and a herd of cows. Then the foot down again on the accelerator and a resultant surging forward of the long yellow hood into the next straightaway.

And how Gogarty loved it! Leaning his head over so that his mouth might be close to my ear, taking his hand off the wheel to shake his finger coyly past his ear, Gogarty talked.

He remembered his student days at Trinity College, Dublin, under that trio of extraordinary professors, Mahaffy, Tyrrell, and Dowden. He quoted the remark Tyrrell made after Mahaffy had been suspended from preaching in the college chapel for his attempt to exalt the Greek Gods over the Christian: "Since Mahaffy gave up preaching in the chapel I suffer from insomnia at the services", his mimicry of Tyrrell's high, Oxford-accented voice making the remark much funnier than it is in cold print. He spoke of the many personalities with which Dublin bristled a generation ago, of Zozimus who, with a name like a Renaissance scholar in *us*, walked about Dublin in cricket costume, a strolling satire of the English game; who, although he knew Dublin like a book, insisted on finding his way home by compass. He told of the days when he and Joyce and Trench (Trench is Haines in *Ulysses*) lived together in the

Martello tower that Gogarty rented for nine pounds a year. He told of how they objected to a British warship which was anchored off shore so as to interfere with their view, wrote a protest to the British Admiralty, and had the ship removed. And thus passed the lovely fragrant Midlands, Padraic Colum's country, and before I knew it, we drew up before the Spanish Gate in Galway town, our first stop.

From there on the country was lovely, Lough Corrib on our right and straight ahead the beautiful Maumturk Mountains in the closing hour of the long Irish twilight. In an unbelievably short time we drew up at the Leenane Hotel, two hundred odd miles in little more than two hundred minutes, where I got out of the car feeling as if I had been shot across Ireland on a projectile.

The next day we drove from Leenane through Salruck to a point from which we could see the Mweelrea Mountains across Killary Harbour, where we talked to peasants who looked, as Gogarty said, "not only Pre-Celtic but Pre-Anything". Then back to Leenane and on to Letterfrack where we saw the ruins of Gogarty's old house, now re-risen Phoenix-like as the Renvyle House Hotel from the pile of ashes to which the Republicans reduced it during the Civil War. And if you stay at the Renvyle House Hotel to-day, someone is sure to tell you that it was the former home of a man who is in *Ulysses*. From Renvyle we went on to Loch Tully, where Gogarty

has an island on which he was building a new summer place. Although the house was still under construction, Gogarty was already planning how he might alight near it in a seaplane from Dublin.

On our way back from the West we turned south at Galway to visit Kinvarra for a glimpse of the Norman castle Gogarty had bought there with the idea of later restoring it, and our visit surprised an Irish peasant who, to Gogarty's dismay, was stabling his horse in the tower built by the Normans four hundred years before Spenser lived in and absorbed the Irish landscape. When we got out to look inside the tower, Gogarty stopped before it and raised his right hand in the Indian-How-like gesture which he and all Dublin use to signify that what is to follow is a quotation from William Butler Yeats himself. " 'The Normans had form, Gogarty, the Normans had form,' were Yeats's words when I showed him my tower," said Gogarty. And then as we walked up the stairs of the tower, its four sides oriented to the four points of the compass, Gogarty spoke of Yeats.

Gogarty is delightful on the subject of Yeats, his attitude toward his famous fellow-townsmen being compounded of reverence for his genius, delight in his foibles, gratitude for his kindness, and appreciation of the subtle mummer Yeats can be. Gogarty loves to peer into the folds of Yeats's mind, and he loves particularly to excite him to action. And Yeats, of course,

plays up. "I decided to take Yeats swimming," said Gogarty, "but in order to stir Yeats out of dream into action, I must appeal to his imagination. So I talked of the swimming match of Beowulf and Breca; of Swinburne's love of mixing with 'the great sweet mother', 'Clothed with the green and crowned with the foam'; of Byron's fondness for bathing in the jasper sea. And his imagination thus excited, Yeats reluctantly agreed to go. We got into my car and set off, but as we approached the sea, Yeats's resolution began to weaken:

Yeats (after a mile or two, in a chant-like voice to the accompaniment of faint strains from a psaltery hidden under the hood of the car). Gogarty, I'm afraid I can't go in bathing: I've forgotten to bring a suit.

Gogarty. I thought you would; I have two.

Yeats (after another mile). Gogarty, I'm afraid I can't go bathing: I have forgotten to bring a towel.

Gogarty. I thought you would; I have two.

When we got to the beach I gave Yeats a suit and towel, put his pince-nez in my pocket, and we bathed in the jasper sea.

But Gogarty was not so successful in getting Yeats on horseback. "I knew," said Gogarty, "that if I could get Yeats on a horse I could put a new rhythm into English lyric verse." And so he began to speak of the noble and benevolent Marcus Aurelius, who rides in bronze on the Capitoline Hill; of Chiron, wise tutor of Jason and Achilles; and of the Centaurs,

who thundered headlong down the roadway of excess—surrounding horseback riding with the tradition that Yeats loves to see about the things he does and thinks of. Again Yeats succumbed, but this time Mrs. Yeats put her foot down. New rhythm or no, she was not going to allow her famous husband to get on a horse.

As we passed through Enfield or Kilcock, I forget which, we were stopped by the sharp whistle of a policeman. We were doing fifty through the village square, but it wasn't for speeding that we had been stopped, primarily, Kevin O'Higgins, Minister of Justice, had been murdered that noon, and the police were questioning all cars. "I am Senator Oliver Gogarty," said Gogarty, mentally assuming the toga; "can I be of help?" He couldn't, and we proceeded on to Dublin.

This past Spring—six years later—I saw him again. He was the same Gogarty, running down the steps of the Statler Hotel to greet me when I came to take him to his Harvard lecture, talking all the way to Cambridge in the automobile, overflowing with anecdote and comment on the life he had encountered in the lecture tour which had taken him from coast to coast full of fresh thought and fresh enthusiasms. For Gogarty's intellectual capital is in rapid circulation, culture is for him an adventure—the discovery in an obscure Elizabethan poet of the wonderful line, "He grasped at love and filled his arms with bays," the epitome of the life of many a

poet; the rescue of some fine ringing sentence with the sound of smitten bronze in it, from a medical treatise; the return to the world of a beautiful old Scotch song, hidden like a violet among the weeds of much that has been deservedly forgotten in an obsolete anthology; the perception in *Old Man River* of a microcosm of life concealed from most of us by the film of familiarity. Of course he had a new story about Yeats; baffled by Mrs. Yeats's watchfulness in his plan to put Yeats upon a horse, he had succeeded in taking him up in his plane, for Gogarty is now a licensed pilot and, the Mercedes garaged, he now wings his way to the West, singing, like the beautiful Swan-Children of Lir. He had taken up A. E., too, but that had necessitated a new safety strap—"the ordinary strap was too small for the God".

Gogarty was, as always, a delight to all who saw and heard him, his modesty endearing him to those who could only partially appreciate his wit, the heaven-sent modesty that goes hand in hand with the shyness with which in his poetry he broods on Beauty, fearful that someone may surprise him on his knees before her shrine. Almost daily his poetry grows more gay and arch, more musical in its tune, swifter and surer in its choriambic dance, more beautiful in its expression of the delights Nature offers to the inviting eye. Sometimes in his verse that rare marriage of wit and beauty is so perfect as to make us regret all the more the occasions when



the wit, laughing, banishes the beauty, bruising a rhythm and breaking a mood that have given us great joy. But gradually, and with all the sureness of Nature, the poet emerges from the chrysalis of the wit. By his poetry will the many of the future know the essence of a personality which, in the flesh, has been the wonder of the few.

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SHAPES OF EARTH AND SKY

## THE CRAB TREE

HERE is the crab tree,  
Firm and erect,  
In spite of the thin soil,  
In spite of neglect.  
The twisted root grapples  
For sap with the rock,  
And draws the hard juice  
To the succulent top:  
Here are wild apples,  
Here's a tart crop!

No outlandish grafting  
That ever grew soft  
In a sweet air of Persia,  
Or safe Roman croft;  
Unsheltered by steading,  
Rock-rooted and grown,  
A great tree of Erin,  
It stands up alone,  
A forest tree spreading  
Where forests are gone.

Of all who pass by it  
How few in it see  
A westering remnant  
Of days when Lough Neagh  
Flowed up the long dingles  
Its blossom had lit,

Old days of a glory  
Time cannot repeat;  
And therefore it mingles  
The bitter and sweet.

It takes from the West Wind  
The thrust of the main;  
It makes from the tension  
Of sky and of plain,  
Of what clay enacted,  
Of living alarm,  
A vitalised symbol  
Of earth and of storm,  
Of Chaos contracted  
To intricate form.

Unbreakable wrestler!  
What sapling or herb  
Has core of such sweetness  
And fruit so acerb?  
So grim a transmitter  
Of life through mishap,  
That one wonders whether  
If that in the sap  
Is sweet or is bitter  
Which makes it stand up.



## WITH A COIN FROM SYRACUSE

WHERE is the hand to trace  
The contour of her face:  
The nose so straight and fine  
Down from the forehead's line;

The curved and curtal lip  
Full in companionship  
With that lip's overplus,  
Proud and most sumptuous,

Which draws its curve within,  
Swelling the faultless chin?  
What artist knows the technique of the Doric neck:

The line that keeps with all  
The features vertical,  
Crowned with the thickly rolled  
And corrugated gold?

The curious hands are lost  
On the sweet Asian coast,  
That made the coins enwrought,  
(Fairer than all they bought)

With emblems round the proud  
Untroubled face of god  
And goddess. Or they lie  
At Syracuse hard by

The Fountain Arethuse.  
Therefore from Syracuse  
I send this face to her  
Whose face is lovelier,

Alas, and as remote  
As hers around whose throat  
The curving fishes swim,  
As round a fountain's brim.

It shows on the reverse  
Pherenikos the horse;  
And that's as it should be:  
Horses she loves, for she

Is come of the old stock,  
Lords of the limestone rock,  
And acres fit to breed  
Many a likely steed,

Straight in the back and bone,  
With head high, like her own,  
And blood that, tamed and milc  
Can suddenly go wild.

## PORTRAIT WITH BACKGROUND

DERVORGILLA's supremely lovely daughter,  
Recalling him, of all the Leinstermen Ri,  
Him whose love and hate brought o'er the water  
Strongbow and Henry;

Brought rigid law, the long spear and the horsemen  
Riding in steel; and the rhymed, romantic, high line;  
Built those square keeps on the forts of the Norsemen,  
Still on our sky-line.

I would have brought, if I saw a chance of losing  
You, many more—we are living in War-rife time—  
Knights of the air and the submarine men cruising,  
Trained through a lifetime;

Brought the implacable hand with law-breakers,  
Drilled the Too-many and broken their effrontery;  
Broken the dream of the men of a few acres  
Ruling a country;

Brought the long day with its leisure and its duty,  
Built once again the limestone lordly houses—  
Founded on steel is the edifice of Beauty,  
All it avows is.

Here your long limbs and your golden hair affright  
men,  
Slave are their souls, and instinctively they hate them,

Knowing full well that such charms can but invite  
men,  
Heroes to mate them.

Eyes of the green of the woods that maddened  
Tristram!

Fair skin and smooth as the rosy-footed dove's wing!  
Who would not fight, if he saw you, against this  
trammelling of Love's wing?

Aye; and bow down, if he saw but half the vision,  
I dare not call to the mind's eye, to adore you;  
And be, if that great light shone with precision,  
Awestruck before you.

## NON DOLET

OUR friends go with us as we go  
Down the long path where Beauty wends,  
Where all we love forgathers, so  
Why should we fear to join our friends?

Who would survive them to outlast  
His children; to outwear his fame—  
Left when the Triumph has gone past—  
To win from Age, not Time, a name?

Then do not shudder at the knife  
That Death's indifferent hand drives home,  
But with the Strivers leave the Strife,  
Nor, after Cæsar, skulk in Rome.

## VIRGIL

FROM Mantua's meadows to Imperial Rome  
Came Virgil, with the wood-light in his eyes,  
Browned by the suns that round his hillside home  
Burned on the chestnuts and the ilices.  
And these he left, and left the fallows where  
The slow streams freshened many a bank of thyme,  
To found a city in the Roman air,  
And build the epic turrets in a rhyme.  
But were the woodland deities forgot,  
Pan, Sylvan, and the sister nymphs for whom  
He poured his melody the fields along?  
They gave him for his faith a happy lot:  
The waving of the meadows in his song  
And the spontaneous laurel at his tomb.

## GOLDEN STOCKINGS



GOLDEN stockings you had on  
In the meadow where you ran;  
And your little knees together  
Bobbed like pippins in the weather,  
When the breezes rush and fight  
For those dimples of delight,  
And they dance from the pursuit,  
And the leaf looks like the fruit.

I have many a sight in mind  
That would last if I were blind;  
Many verses I could write  
That would bring me many a sight.  
Now I only see but one,  
See you running in the sun,  
And the gold-dust coming up  
From the trampled buttercup.

## P O R T R A I T

[Diana Clothed]

Who would have thought  
That your mottled and your speckled,  
Wavering and dappled,  
Leaf-brown costume in the light,  
Held at the shoulder  
By an orchid's freckled anther,  
Covering a bosom of an interrupted white,  
Was but the pelt  
That the Maiden, the Resistless,  
Light of Heel, the Huntress,  
Yes; the tall Toxophilite,  
Skinned in the brakes  
From a slowly dying panther,  
Shot in the brakes  
By her fatal arrow's flight?—  
Nothing to do with a merciful mild amice;—  
Too well I know, and it needs no second sight!  
Ah, now I know;  
I should long ago have guessed it  
From your way who wear it,  
It is nothing more than this:  
Cruelty clings to it—  
It is nothing but the chlamys  
Covering, and showing up  
The breast of Artemis!



## THE WAVELESS BAY

[Kiltymon]

I CLOSE my eyes to hold a better sight,  
And all my mind is opened on a scene  
Of oaks with leaves of amber in the green,  
A mist of blue beneath them: to the right  
A long cape fades beyond the azurite  
Of one calm bay to which the pastures lean.  
The rounded fields are warm, and in between  
The yellow gorse is glaring stiff and bright.  
It matters little what distraction drives  
Clouds through my mind and breaks the outer day.  
For all I know that distant water strives  
Against the land. I have it all my way:  
Through budding oaks a steadfast sun survives:  
Peace on the fading cape, the waveless bay.

## NYMPHIS ET FONTIBUS

SOLDIER of Rome, well trained and hard,  
Who dwelt in Britain once and warred,  
With no outlandish creed to mar  
The stern salvation of the war.

Strong in yourself, you bore your care,  
Your soul was like your camp, four-square;  
And uncomplaining, iron shod,  
Marched with Rome's honour for your god.

No bigot! In barbarian lands,  
Roman where Rome no longer stands,  
This altar to your hard-won love:  
Earth, and the Nymphs and Springs thereof.

## THE PHŒNIX

WAKEFUL, I saw my window sashed  
With silver light before sunrise,  
When, suddenly, the Phoenix flashed  
A rainbow streak across the skies;  
And it was gone before I said:

The Phoenix! In a book I read  
The night before, I learnt to trace  
That marvel to the happy place  
It flies in, neither linde nor lawn  
Of Earth, but in the Groves of Dawn.

There are so many things, the sight  
Goes clean through as it were X-ray;  
The finer things that hide in light,  
Or in the heaven, that one might say,  
Invisible, but we who know  
How heedlessly the sight can go,  
Employ the mind's eye but to find  
That we are marvellously blind.

There are so many things that I  
Could see that now seem to be hid,  
I feel that they would crowd the sky  
If I but lifted up a lid;  
Or sang a song, or gave a shout,  
That I would see them standing out:  
But, as it is, what have I done  
With all I've seen under the sun?

The Spring that comes before the Spring  
And waits while boughs are thin and bare,  
A deepened light, a quickening,  
Annunciation in the air,  
Delights me more, though cold and brief,  
Than buds abounding, and the leaf.

And then the silver isles out far  
On leaden edge of Eastern seas,  
Beneath a dappled sky, which are  
Our daily lost Atlantides,  
A moment seen, and they are gone.  
Bright archipelagos of dawn  
Are more to me, and solider,  
Than the near hills which never stir.

But would there be this seeking for,  
This wistful straining after things:  
Islands surmised from lines of shore,  
Unless within me there were wings,  
Wings that can fly in, and belong  
Only to realms revealed by song,  
That bring those realms about their nest,  
Merging the Seeker and the Quest?

They beat in faintly purple air;  
Beneath them rise autumnal trees;  
But Autumn's colours usher there  
A Spring which is Eternity's,

A Spring which overtakes the fruit,  
Till blossoms crown the fond pursuit.  
And there is neither Time nor Space  
Within that paradisal place;  
Nor separating length and breadth;  
With Love identical is Death;  
And no more fearful in that grove  
Is Death to those who dwell than Love.

Not in our East then, but in verse,  
The far-seen flashing feather flies,  
In Groves of Dawn whose wells immerse  
The star that lights and leads the Wise.  
But rare's the book that holds the Word  
That moves the uncompanioned Bird  
To shake the air, and, in its flight,  
Rain down the variegated light  
That makes all timeless, and transforms  
Unmagical and ageing norms;  
And, when it falls upon, renews  
The full blue eye, the twinkling thews,  
And makes again the heart of man  
Ageless and epinikian.

## TO THE LADY —

[Who acted Queen Elizabeth for the Screen]

STRANGE that you should have acted Gloriana  
Who rule us in more spacious days, Diana!  
She was the imperfect morning in which you  
To the perfection of this full day grew,  
So moted with your glory that we are  
The lit companions of your blazing star  
That makes our NOW the noon-day of all time,  
And puts sweet flesh upon the limbs of rhyme  
To sing the harvest of Creation home.  
To what enchanted margin have we come?  
Why is your spell not fragile? Can it last?  
Beauty was all too brittle in the past;  
And long in one place Joy has never been;  
Nor without danger Artemis was seen.

I poise my wings and stand on the blue air  
(Little the dangerous for danger care),  
With sharpened beak and eyes that never blink,  
To pounce on Beauty on Destruction's brink.  
Where do you lead? And what unguessed at coast  
Will echo with your fame when we are gone?  
What lands will dream of Beauty modelled on  
That which we gaze at till our eyes grow dim?  
I cannot see your equal, much less limn  
Her features who will dare to evening lands  
Bring back your crescent lids, your lips, your hands,

And distillation of distinguished words  
Which drop as slow as honey out of gourds:  
"It was no dream": I heard them, well they might  
Assure me no enchantment lured the sight!

But lest one think to feel your very breath  
When we are lying in the gap of death,  
I sing and say to all who then may be:  
What they behold is but your effigy,  
An aberration out of Beauty's path,  
Pretender in Perfection's aftermath!  
Where are the regal tresses of dull gold,  
The strange vert eyes so steady and so cold,  
The body carried to an inward tune  
As if the Graces had become triune?  
Nor would we rise, nor have a voice recall  
Us who in brave days loved the original.

## K I N G D O M S

THE sailor tells the children  
His stories of the sea,  
Their eyes look over the water  
To where his wonders be:

The flowers as big as teacups,  
The great big butterflies,  
The long unfooted beaches  
Where stored-up treasure lies.

More than a thousand islands  
Each curved around its pool:  
All kingdoms filled with sunlight,  
Where no one goes to school;

The fish that leave the water  
In sudden bends of light;  
The birds as blue as china;  
The flies that gleam by night . . .

Till, slowly, I remember  
A wistful place; and then—  
The story of that Kingdom  
First told to long-shoremen.



## O BOYS! O BOYS!

O BOYS, the times I've seen!  
The things I've done and known!  
If you knew where I have been,  
Or half the joys I've had,  
You never would leave me alone;  
But pester me to tell,  
Swearing to keep it dark,  
What . . . but I know quite well:  
Every solicitor's clerk  
Would break out and go mad;  
And all the dogs would bark!

There was a young fellow of old  
Who spoke of a wonderful town,  
Built on a lake of gold,  
With many a barge and raft  
Afloat in the cooling sun,  
And lutes upon the lake  
Played by such courtesans . . .  
The sight was enough to take  
The reason out of a man's  
Brain; and to leave him daft,  
Babbling of lutes and fans.

The tale was right enough:  
Willows and orioles,  
And ladies skilled in love:  
But they listened only to smirk,

For he spoke to incredulous fools,  
And, maybe, was sorry he spoke;  
For no one believes in joys,  
And Peace on Earth is a joke,  
Which, anyhow, telling destroys;  
So better go on with your work:  
But Boys! O Boys! O Boys!

## I TREMBLE TO THINK

I TREMBLE to think that soon  
Darkness shall close my sight,  
And all that under the sun  
I saw, and by moonlight:  
Beautiful shadows and forms,  
Colours, and, over the hill,  
Clouds, like visible storms  
At peace when the air is still;  
The nameless, wonderful hues  
That torture the eyes with joy  
When the sea has a faint primrose,  
On its blue and silver alloy—  
All to be left untold,  
The white and ethereal blue  
That carries the chaos of gold  
Dreams that I dreamt of you!  
But these the years must spare,  
Too transient far for time:  
There is no age for the air,  
Light is not of our clime.  
But I whom the nets of the years  
Surely at last shall enmesh  
Before I can save in verse  
The timeless traits of the flesh,  
Shall have no peace till the cloud  
Of thought takes definite shape,  
And bodies you forth unbowed,  
Tall, on a bare landscape,

Where earth the stone upthrusts—  
Holding your exquisite frock  
Against the morning gusts,  
And light is on half the rock.

## TO THE MOON

O BORN before our birth began!  
Through all your blanched and listening vales,  
Far from the echoing shores of man,  
Aloof, may sing—what nightingales!

## TO PETRONIUS ARBITER

PROCONSUL of Bithynia,  
Who loved to turn the night to day,  
Yet for your ease had more to show  
Than others for their push and go.  
Teach us to save the soul's expense,  
And win to Fame through indolence.

## NON BLANDULA ILLA

WHEN that which bore my body up takes wings  
At night-fall, and my limbs are thrown to rest,  
I watch in wonder, as it makes its quest,  
The place it chooses for its wanderings.  
No easeful meadows nor delightful springs  
Nor visionary islands lure it best,  
But far off on the margin of the West  
A sea-gray house whereby the blackbird sings.  
The waves come up like Berserks from the sea,  
The crystal mountains yield a little sand,  
Through level light the bird of valour calls.  
Adventurous as a Viking must that be  
Which will not rest when sleep on Nature falls  
But hastens to the confines of the land.

## FRESH FIELDS

I GAZE and gaze when I behold  
The meadows springing green and gold.  
I gaze until my mind is naught  
But wonderful and wordless thought!  
Till, suddenly, surpassing wit,  
Spontaneous meadows spring in it;  
And I am but a glass between  
Un-walked in meadows, gold and green.



## THE PLUM TREE BY THE HOUSE

IN morning light my damson showed  
Its airy branches oversnowed  
On all their quickening fronds,  
That tingled where the early sun  
Was flowing soft as silence on  
Palm trees by coral ponds.  
Out of the dark of sleep I come  
To find the clay break into bloom,  
The black boughs all in white!  
I said, I must stand still and watch  
This glory, strive no more to match  
With similes things fair.  
I am not fit to conjure up  
A bird that's white enough to hop  
Unstained in such a tree;  
Nor crest him with the bloom to come  
In purple glory on the plum.  
Leave me alone with my delight  
To store up joy against the night,  
This moment leave to me!  
Why should a poet strain his head  
To make his mind a marriage bed;  
Shall Beauty cease to bear?  
There must be things which never shall  
Be matched or made symmetrical  
On Earth or in the Air;

Branches that Chinese draughtsmen drew,  
Which none may find an equal to,  
Unless he enter there  
Where none may live—and more's the pity!—  
The Perfect, the Forbidden City,  
That's built—ah, God knows where!  
Then leave me while I have the light  
To fill my mind with growths of white,  
Think of them longer than  
Their budding hour, their springing day,  
Until my mind is more than May;  
And, maybe, I shall plan  
To make them yet break out like this  
And blossom where their image is,  
More lasting and more deep  
Than coral boughs in light inurned,  
When they are to the earth returned;  
And I am turned to sleep.

## MELSUNGEN

Love, let us go to the village of Melsungen,  
Folded in the river which is flowing without noise:  
Dark are the woods and the fields are green and  
    golden,  
Spreading to the ripple of the hills against the skies.

Hold down the car on the long road to Melsungen;  
Hold the heart down that no speed can ever sate!  
Through the noon already it has raced into the  
    evening,  
Raced, and reached the gables in the evening falling  
    late.

Long have I gazed at your window in Melsungen,  
Yellow in the lamp-light while I watch the miles of  
    noon,  
Dreaming of peace as the arrow from the bow-string  
Dreams, and gains in quiet from the speed which  
    makes it swoon.

Love, let us lean from a dormer in Melsungen,  
Giving on the valley where the light has found the  
    stream,  
Cool and becalmed, as the moonlight on the water,  
Motionless and quiet as beyond our life a dream.

## LIFFEY BRIDGE

I GAZED along the waters at the West,  
Watching the low sky colour into flame,  
Until each narrowing steeple I could name  
Grew dark as the far vapours, and my breast  
With silence like a sorrow was possessed.  
And men as moving shadows went and came.  
The smoke that stained the sunset seemed like shame,  
Or lust, or some great evil unexpressed.  
Then with a longing for the taintless air,  
I called that desolation back again,  
Which reigned when Liffey's widening banks were  
    bare;  
Before Ben Edair gazed upon the Dane,  
Before the Hurdle Ford, and long before  
Finn drowned the young men by its meadowy shore.

## THE SHIP

A SHIP from Valparaiso came  
And in the Bay her sails were furled;  
She brought the wonder of her name,  
And tidings from a sunnier world.

O you must voyage far if you  
Would sail away from gloom and wet,  
And see beneath the Andes blue  
Our white, umbrageous city set.

But I was young and would not go;  
For I believed when I was young  
That somehow life in time would show  
All that was ever said or sung.

Over the golden pools of sleep  
She went long since with gilded spars;  
Into the night-empurpled deep,  
And traced her legend on the stars.

But she will come for me once more,  
And I shall see that city set,  
The mountainous, Pacific shore—  
By God, I half believe it yet!

## TO THE LADY —

IN the most intimate years your gables grew  
And stood by Oxford on their watery hill;  
When all the days were spacious, they were still  
A country home of music undisturbed.  
You keep your life aloof from common things,  
Lovely and strange in beauty of its own;  
Like a tall Saint who clasps upon her breast  
A Pindar hidden by a palimpsest,  
And both ordain a life austere and curbed;  
Fixed in the change, and timeless as a shrine  
Upon the border of a Grecian town  
Where there is calm beyond the reach of gold.  
My mind seeks beauty and it dwells on you  
Under the elms—and all the air was Spring's,  
A leaven of silence in the misty dew  
Leavening the light, the shadow leavening,  
Your cloak and that tall feather, white under blue—  
Walking beside a poet in the evening.

## EARTH AND SEA

It does me good to see the ships  
Back safely from the deep sea main;  
To see the slender mizzen tips,  
And all the ropes that stood the strain;

To hear the old men shout "Ahoy",  
Glad-hearted at the journey's end,  
And fix the favourite to the buoy,  
Who had the wind and sea to friend;

To meet, when sails are lashed to spars,  
The men for whom Earth's free from care,  
And Heaven a clock with certain stars,  
And Hell a word with which to swear.

SUNT APUD INFERNOS TOT  
MILIA FORMOSARUM

I, as the Wise Ones held of old,  
Hold there's an Underworld to this;  
And do not fear to be enrolled  
In Death's kind metamorphosis.

More wonderful than China's halls  
To Polo; more than all the West  
That shone through the confining walls  
When great Magellan made the quest.

Enlarged and free, the wings of Rhyme  
Cannot outreach its purple air;  
The generations of all Time  
And all the lovely Dead are there.



## R I N G S E N D

[After Reading Tolstoi]

I WILL live in Ringsend  
With a red-headed whore,  
And the fanlight gone in  
Where it lights the hall-door;  
And listen each night  
For her querulous shout,  
As at last she streels in  
And the pubs empty out.  
To soothe that wild breast  
With my old-fangled songs,  
Till she feels it redressed  
From inordinate wrongs,  
Imagined, outrageous,  
Preposterous wrongs,  
Till peace at last comes,  
Shall be all I will do,  
Where the little lamp blooms  
Like a rose in the stew;  
And up the back garden  
The sound comes to me  
Of the lapsing, unsoilable,  
Whispering sea.

## MARCUS CURTIUS

IN response to an oracle which declared that a gulf recently opened in the Forum could only be closed by casting into it that which Rome held most dear, Marcus Curtius, fully armed, mounted his war-horse and plunged, for that which Rome held dearest was her chivalry.

'Tis not by brooding on delight  
That men take heart of pride, and force  
To pull the saddle-girthings tight  
And close the gulf on staring horse.

From softness only softness comes;  
Urged by a bitterer shout within,  
Men of the trumpets and the drums  
Seek, with appropriate discipline,

That Glory past the pit or wall  
Which contradicts and stops the breath,  
And with immortalising gall  
Builds the most stubborn things on death.

## TO A COCK

WHY do you strut and crow,  
And thus all gaudy go,  
Through squalor, with a show  
That tempts derision?  
Do you a livery use  
Or dress you up in hues  
You were not free to choose  
Of your own vision?

Colours of dawn and joy  
That with delight destroy:  
Your body all a Troy  
To house desire,  
Your mien as proud and brave  
As his who fought to save  
The fatal Queen who gave  
But gifts of fire.

Strange that a small brown hen  
Should charm you thus! For men  
Great Beauty shines, as when  
The Argive valleys  
Bore her limbs for whom Greece  
For ten years knew no peace,  
Or our own Western seas  
Bore Grace O'Malley's.

Their birth no happy star  
Attended; rigid war  
Beleaguered towns, and far  
    Deep fields were bloody!  
Demure is not the mien  
Of Beauty, by her een  
The insolent pale Queen  
    Who makes me ruddy.

What, if I could appear  
As you do, and strike fear!  
But would she fail to sneer  
    Who will not heed a  
Lover? nor cry "Absurd  
You are, but as a bird . . . !  
Is it to be inferred  
    That I am Leda?"

Nor would it much avail  
Were I to say "The male  
In beauty doth prevail  
    Largely in Nature",  
For she would but retort,  
"Is man the only sort  
Whose females must pay court,  
    My beauteous creature?"

Alas, befeathered bull!  
My love's too pitiful,  
Too pensive, kind, less full

Than that of bird or  
Beast, overcharged with fate  
And more compassionate  
Than yours you satiate  
Half linked to murder.

The more we rise above  
The beast or even the dove  
Sorrow distempers love;  
But yours is gladdest,  
Soon gathered and soon spent,  
A fierce arbitrament;  
And you do not repent  
O perfect Sadist!

To Semele none came,  
None to each Sabine dame,  
Not Hercules aflame—  
Not dawn to heaven,  
Came with as great affright  
As you do burning bright,  
Not—for the poor hen's plight—  
To Kathleen Kevin;

Further she cannot go,  
She falters and lies low  
Brought down by love, a throe  
That throws us all;  
Soon to be scaled and hacked  
And, like a city, sacked

With nothing left intact  
Within the wall.

When you have persevered  
As did the dawn you cheered  
When darkness disappeared,  
Give not the strife up  
Till by the Passion Play  
Of Death for Life's relay,  
The old authentic way  
You conjure life up!

O trample her in dust  
So that you slake your lust!  
Pull back her neck and thrust  
To kill the tempter.  
Your peace how dare she fret  
With feet demurely set?  
Give her another yet  
And don't exempt her!

Take vengeance for the sting  
In love's elusive wing,  
With beak and talon cling  
In full refulgence.  
O work for all your worth  
To bring your spirit to birth;  
For this kind goeth forth  
By self-indulgence!

For when your spurs were gained  
Passion was unrestrained.  
Your hues were not obtained  
    From dust and ashes.  
You did of old deride  
His spirit who denied.  
You are but gratified  
    By Life's fierce flashes.

Now indignation foams!  
The purple of your combs  
Is purpler than the plum's  
    Or purple heather's.  
What though it must endure!  
Break Beauty! O secure  
Some respite from the lure  
    Of all the feathers!

# CONCERNING HERMIONE

## I. THE CONQUEST

“SINCE the Conquest none of us  
Has died young except in battle.”  
I knew that hers was no mean house,  
And that beneath her gentle prattle  
There was likely hid in words  
What could never anger Fame;  
The glory of continuous swords,  
The obligations of a name.  
Had I grown incredulous,  
Thinking for a little space:  
Though she has the daring brows,  
She has not the falcon face;  
In the storm from days of old  
It is hard to keep at poise,  
And it is the over-bold,  
Gallant-hearted, Fate destroys:  
Could I doubt that her forebears  
Kept their foothold on the sands,  
Triumphed through eight hundred years,  
From the hucksters kept their lands,  
And still kept the conquering knack—  
I who had myself gone down  
Without waiting the attack  
Of their youngest daughter’s frown?



## II. EXORCISM

To banish your shape from my mind  
I thought of the dangerous wood  
Where a man might wander and find,  
By a stream in the solitude,  
The Queen it is death if one sees,  
Death by a merciless dart;  
But how could that bring me release,  
Shot as I am to the heart?

Beauty will cure me, I cried;  
By Beauty is Beauty dislodged.  
And I worked on a dream till I eyed  
The Queens whom the young man judged.  
But the vision faded and slipt;  
And the cure was a cure of no worth;  
For I said, when the Queens were stript,  
I have given the prize to a fourth.

Ugliness, Chaos and War  
I know, but I would not invoke;  
They would feed you as darkness a star,  
And strengthen the beam of my yoke.  
If Love be reborn in a song  
I with my fate will not quarrel,  
But you, if you do him a wrong,  
May be changed to a reed or a laurel.

### III. EXCOMMUNICATION

Go to the fields of purple and gold;  
With lovers and young Queens remain,  
Blossoms and battlements of old,  
Far in the background of my brain.  
Rest with them there, but stand apart,  
Although you equal those who died;  
For no one enters in my heart  
By Death or Love undeified.

### IV. SILENCE

The purple falls between the pines,  
The sun that blanched Arundel walls,  
Remembering them as he declines,  
With purple fills his airy halls.  
We drove all day; and all day long  
Of Love and longing long we spoke;  
And sang so often ballad and song,  
The crescent moon cannot evoke  
Another word; though Beauty calls  
There is no word that can be said.  
If Hesperus unhailed shines on,  
O do not dream that Love is dead.  
The hand I take is not withdrawn,  
Between the pines the purple falls.

## V. A SOUND

She called me by my Christian name,  
Quite simply of her own accord,  
And unexpectedly it came—

O the exceeding great reward!  
Where are the years of longing, years  
Of vigils and anxieties,  
My perturbations now, my fears?  
Gone with the wind across the trees.  
Enchanted now, I walk in peace,  
As one who walking on a sward  
At twilight hears, or thinks he hears,  
A fanfare out of Joyous Gard.

## CENTAURS

To get away from Reason seems  
To be the first thing one must do  
To live in happiness; with dreams  
Some cloud the mind, and some bedew  
The intellect with subtler juice,  
Till good Lyaeus sets them free;  
Some use tobacco, some abuse  
The herbs of healing: suffer me  
To live with leathery women and men  
Who give their whole mind up to horses;  
Mount and dismount and mount again,  
And leave the stars to their own courses.  
On through the morning air to go,  
To break the rainbow on the briar,  
To hold the horse, to hear him blow  
The bellows of primeval fire;  
To feel life surging through the dark  
As waywardly as once it came  
Before the filched unnatural spark  
Outshone the kindly natural flame.  
Thus was the Ancient Wisdom found,  
A wisdom suited to my mind,  
And taught by Chiron the renowned,  
The man and animal combined.

## ANGLERS

THAT pleasant Chinese poet Ching Chih Ho,  
Who spent his time in fishing with no bait,  
Recalled at last from exile, would not go,  
Nor leave the stream where he could meditate  
And foil all interrupters by his ruse,  
Sitting beside the water with his line;  
Was it a wonder that he should refuse,  
When he could catch his rhythms half asleep,  
Watching below the lilies fishes shine,  
Or move not—it was all the same to him—  
And river mosses when he gazed more deep  
And deeper, clouds across the azure swim?  
There's not a roof now on the courts whose  
schemes  
Kept men awake and anxious all night long,  
Distracted with their working out; but dreams  
He made in idleness and turned to Song  
Can still delight his people. As for me,  
I, who must daily at enactments look  
To make men happy by legality,  
Envy the poet of that baitless hook.

## TO THE LIFFEY WITH THE SWANS

KEEP you these calm and lovely things,  
And float them on your clearest water;  
For one would not disgrace a King's  
Transformed beloved and buoyant daughter.

And with her goes this sprightly swan,  
A bird of more than royal feather,  
With alban beauty clothed upon:  
O keep them fair and well together!

As fair as was that doubled Bird,  
By love of Leda so besotten,  
That she was all with wonder stirred,  
And the Twin Sportsmen were begotten!

# HIGH TIDE AT MALAHIDE

[*To Lynn Doyle*]

THE luminous air is wet  
As if the moon came through  
To hold as in a net  
Such as the spiders set  
By ditch and rivulet,  
The grey unfallen dew.  
The sun is not down yet;  
As yet the eve is new. .

The water is all a-quiver,  
There scarce is room to stand  
Beside the tidal river  
So narrowed is the strand;  
And, over there, the wood  
Is standing in a flood,  
Erect, and upside down;  
And at its roots, a swan.

A silvern mist enhances,  
By tangling half the light,  
The glowing bay's expanses  
Which else had been too bright;  
For air is subject to  
A tidal ebb and flow.

And all the weeds with sandy root,  
That in the sunshine on the beach

Crackled like ashes underfoot,  
Are standing upright now to stretch,  
All ambered from within, each frond  
That sways revived in the great pond;  
And every axon in my brain  
And neuron takes the tide again,  
Made all the fuller from the tide  
That brims the sands of Malahide;  
But what shall come into it now  
I know not. I await the flow.  
I must abide the cosmic main  
Whose high tide floods the stranded brain;  
For no such miracle is wrought  
On earth like this by taking thought.

*Oh, look at the ships  
With their sails coming down  
And the wonderful sweeps  
That are steering them still  
To the little grey town  
On the green of the hill!  
Are they Norman or Norse,  
Or descendants of Conn  
Returning in force  
From a lost British town,  
With women and loot now the Roman is gone?  
They are Norse! For the bugles are wild in the woods,  
Alarms to the farms to look after their goods:  
To bury their cauldrons and hide all their herds.*



*They are Norse! I can tell by the length of their swords—  
Oh, no; by their spears and the shape of their shields  
They are Normans: the men who stand stiff in the fields  
In hedges of battle that no one may turn;  
The men who build castles that no one may burn;  
The men who give laws to the chief and the kern.  
Salt of the earth,  
Salt of the sea,  
Norman and Norse  
And the wild man in me!  
The founders of cities,  
The takers of fields,  
The heroes too proud to wear armour or shields,  
Their blood is in you,  
As it cannot but be,  
O Townsman of towns on an estuary!*

O clear Swords River that now without noise  
Meets in this marvellous equipoise,  
O clear Swords River, O let me know  
What is it you add to the undertow,  
For sight and sound like a bubble tost  
On the high tide no more than on ether is lost:  
No sight or odour or country sound  
Lately reflected or long ago drowned,  
But rises again, and as beautiful  
As the golden weed when the tide is full,  
Or the clouds that floating becalmed, sublime,  
Break out white sails for the azure time.

With what do you mingle your merchandise  
Of hawthorns budding or Autumn skies;  
The cackling flight of the golden nib  
That rallies the leaf to protect the crib;  
The moth gone mad in a zigzag flight  
On the magical edge of the day and the night;  
The flag leaves serried beside your fords,  
Like bronze gone green in the ancient swords;  
The shadowless light of the peace to be;  
The scent of the rain when it dries on the lea?  
White wings are all that endow the sea,  
Except when it grates on its soundless bars  
Of diamonds shoaled from the fallen stars;  
For all that you brought from the fields of home  
Is stored, not lost, in the fields of foam,  
And rises again, for it was not dead,  
Here where the meadows and waters wed.

Remember that by no force terrene  
Does the high tide rise till no sands are seen,  
When silver limits the old green plain,  
And the luminous mist floods into the brain  
At will to replenish the Past again:  
Such wonders cannot on earth be done  
Till the moon joins with the golden sun.

## PER ITER TENEBRICOSUM

ENOUGH! Why should a man bemoan  
A Fate that leads the natural way?  
Or think himself a worthier one  
Than those who braved it in their day?  
If only gladiators died,  
Or Heroes, Death would be his pride;  
But have not little maidens gone,  
And Lesbia's sparrow—all alone?

## THE MILL AT NAUL

I CALL to mind, to bring me sleep,  
That ruin on the naming hill  
Of Naul, with ivy on the keep  
That looks down on a ruined mill,  
Because my mind comes home and rests  
On things which Time no more molests:  
For keep above and mill below  
There is no further way to go:  
They have already gone so far  
With Time, that as the hill they are,  
Or as the mill-pond by the mill,  
Which, though it flows, is standing still;  
Or as the stream and broken range  
That only know immortal change;  
For Time gives here, in turn for peace,  
Man's handiwork a timeless lease;  
And makes and takes it to its own  
As if it were a stream or stone.  
And that is why I love to call  
To mind the drowsy mill at Naul,  
Because such old things flatter me  
With warrants of Eternity,  
When Time's close flag suspends the fray  
With ivy green against the gray.

And I can leave my pride which raged  
Too long, here, in the keep besieged;

And let my love descend to spread  
Through lowly roofs the gift of bread;  
And know that I need range no more  
With Love and Pride accounted for.  
I see the mill, as day is done,  
In sunset of a tardy sun  
That fills the valley to the East  
With all the overflowing West;  
Until the valley brims to hold  
An airy pond of dusty gold  
That shows, as if far down in dream,  
The hill, the mill, the little stream.

The light is golden down below,  
But, on the keep, the afterglow  
Is cold as steel, and sideways flung  
Where ivy leaves the walls unhung.

I saw it first through air so wet  
With dew that falling leaves fell straight;  
For woods, for all their brazen towers,  
Withstand not Autumn's golden showers:  
So where I stood the road was rich  
With bronze and gold that filled the ditch;  
And boughs and leaves dropped so much rain,  
I said, The wheel may turn again,  
And belt itself with drops anew,  
And yet not beat these woods for dew.

And now I lie, till, in my mind,  
The mill is lit, the keep is lined  
With men-at-arms on sentry-go  
Who stand to watch the mill below.  
I see the pond's potential power  
Where might is stilled to conjure flour,  
And, from the strength of rain pent up  
From Heaven, transform an earthly crop.  
I catch the mill-wheel's homely sound,  
The uncouth magic of its round  
Splashing bright blessings as it turns,  
On twinkling tufts and dangling ferns,  
Performing, with expansive girth,  
The mingling rites of heaven and earth;  
I see and hear it clear as day  
Though Naul is eighteen miles away.

Don't think these are the only turns  
The half-unconscious mind discerns.  
I see far more than you can spy  
Who are not half asleep as I;  
I see the way, now half awake,  
The protons and electrons take  
To spin the world, and bring the grist  
To wild dreams of the scientist,  
Who knows, for all he hopes to know,  
That round a myriad mill-wheels go  
From some far pond, unplumbed and still,  
Which breaks to power and moves the mill.

And now I dwindle till my stream  
Is lost within the pond of dream,  
The pond of dream which holds far more  
Than any stream of earth can pour;  
But, if I lie resigned and still,  
The pond at length may rise and fill.

I do not wonder that none found  
The roofless mill restored and sound,  
Because the more the mind's alert,  
The more the inner eye is hurt,  
An eye to which the light of day  
Is rarely helpful, anyway.  
Before I had a mind at all,  
The mill was working well at Naul;  
And, maybe, when I am resigned  
To lose in sleep the wakeful mind,  
The mill may start to work again  
As once it stood to grind the grain;  
And hum its song for many a season,  
Where now it does not stand to reason.

It seems to me that far down there  
The dusky light is dustier,  
The dust is rising in the air;  
And over every window square  
There is an eyebrow dusty white;  
And would that roof be half so bright  
Unless with flour? It must be flour:  
The mill is trembling into power!

And now I hear a distant drone,  
The upper and the nether stone,  
So far away it only comes  
To fade away in waving hums,  
That tell of work so sweet and strong  
That all that holds it turns to song.

The mill beside the stream is lit  
As if its walls glowed through with wheat;  
And only in the upper streams  
Of light a lonely sea-bird gleams  
In one long arc . . . Ah let it go:  
I want to watch the mill below.

The purple evening turns to dark,  
I soon shall see the cobbles spark  
Where unseen horses pull their load  
Of sacks along a rising road.  
I wonder if I dared look up  
To see the hill, would all this stop?  
And all the scenes that sleep has made,  
To deeper sleep return to fade?  
I wonder now, will this go on  
When light, when light is quite withdrawn;  
And if, when sleep is deeper still,  
The mill without the miller will?



## THE IMAGE-MAKER

HARD is the stone, but harder still  
The delicate performing will  
That guided by a dream alone,  
Subdues and moulds the hardest stone,  
Making the stubborn jade release  
The emblem of eternal peace.

If but the will be firmly bent,  
No stuff resists the mind's intent;  
The adamant abets his skill  
And sternly aids the artist's will,  
To clothe in perdurable pride  
Beauty his transient eyes descried.

## TO ETHNE

I SAW a beautiful face,  
And ever since the seeing,  
To pause for a moment's space  
Is to bring it again into being.

Over the splendour and gloom  
Of thoughts, like a misty star,  
As a goddess out of a mist would come  
To the hard-prest sons of war.

Memory, enfold her and cling!  
And I will go forth against odds.  
But heart, forget her and sing!  
This is no place for the Gods.

## OFF SICILY

SHELLS tilted up by Venus' heel

Seen through the milk of morning air;  
White Sicily confronts our keel

With twin cliffs rising, each as fair  
As that smooth-lined up-tilted boat  
From which the Foam-Born Queen stepped out.

But who can land where I am bound?

In vain the natives tread their home.  
They shall not find its holy ground,

Who have not sought it in the tome  
Whose letters twist like curls that deck  
The nape of Venus' golden neck.

## THE OLD GOOSE

THE daylong rains are dried,  
Cold is the mountain-side,  
The evening light is pined,  
    Not heaven's four quarters  
Know if the moon be set,  
But where green sods are wet  
The white stream holds you yet,  
    Lover of airs and waters!

Soon you will cross the loam,  
And walk the pathway home  
Before the faint stars come,  
    And seek your stable.  
Your old wild life exchanged  
For comforts all is changed;  
For rime-white deserts ranged,  
    A white-washed gable!

Oh, have you quite forgot,  
The flights outbreasting thought  
Before this homely lot  
    Half tamed your pinions?  
The mountains and the stars  
Were once your only bars,  
And where the north wind soars  
    Were your dominions.

You know the depths of air,  
You know the times of year,  
To you all paths are clear  
    And heights of heaven,  
The fens and broken bays  
Where never an hunter strays;  
All cold inhuman ways  
    To you are even.

And all those mirrors known  
That turn the mountains down:  
Your flight a moment shown  
    In gloaming deeper  
Than those high tranquil tides  
Through which your courage rides  
When some straight purpose guides  
    Its winged keeper.

There's blue beyond the peak  
Of Patrick's frozen Reek,  
Oh take on breast and beak  
    The night's dark onset,  
Washed in the mauve twilight  
O'er some far western bight,  
Where islands rest in light  
    Long after sunset!

Islands that gleam and float  
Untouched by voyaging boat,

Withheld but not remote,  
Where wave breaks slowly  
Till all the beach is green,  
Where the great lords are seen  
Who fought and loved a Queen,  
Armed, amorous, and holy.

Easy to put life by  
When friend and foe were nigh;  
Easy for them to die  
Armed and elated!  
And well they died in sooth,  
Who found in fighting truth,  
Before old age had youth  
Repudiated.

Theirs was the exultant age,  
Theirs the ecstatic rage;  
And the embellished page  
Enshrined the slaying.  
For, as old bards averred,  
The song goes with the sword,  
O wing that writ'st the Word,  
Write down this saying:

Love life and use it well:  
That is the tale they tell,  
Who broke it like a shell,  
And won great glory.

But you and I are both  
Inglorious in sloth,  
Unless our ranging youth  
    Redeem our story.

For not preserved by fear  
We fell on quiet here,  
Our friends all dead and dear,  
    A brave blithe army.  
You have your grassy spring  
And cloudy barred wing;  
And I old dreams that sing,  
    And memories stormy.

So that the egg be laid  
For feathers unafraid,  
What matter where is made,  
    When strong winds tire,  
The nest, if we can spend  
Our age in peace, my friend?  
After the journey's end  
    The village spire!

## V E R S E

WHAT should we know,  
For better or worse,  
Of the Long Ago,  
Were it not for Verse:  
What ships went down;  
What walls were razed;  
Who won the crown;  
What lads were praised?  
A fallen stone,  
Or a waste of sands;  
And all is known  
Of Art-less lands.  
But you need not delve  
By the sea-side hills  
Where the Muse herself  
All Time fulfils,  
Who cuts with his scythe  
All things but hers;  
All but the blithe  
Hexameters.



## REFLECTION

SUN, and not a breeze at all  
On the willow-lined canal  
Where the nodding horses tow  
An old boat with painted prow  
Dark and heavy, gliding on,  
While its new paint in the sun  
Circles out an eye to watch  
Every little roof of thatch;  
Trees and bridges; grassy border;  
Plumey trains; and, set in order,  
Posts to bring the telephone  
To each little country town,  
Where the gombeen man rings up  
His stock-broker's bucket shop;  
But the wire holds the birds  
Quite unconscious of his words;  
As each tiny singing throat  
Titters welcome to the boat:  
And the steersman knows how far  
It is still to Mullingar.

Would there be so much to lose  
If I changed into his shoes,  
With my buttocks on the rudder,  
Cleared from Ringsend on the Dodder,  
With no care except to wipe  
On my sleeve my old clay pipe?

He would make the change with pleasure,  
For he envies me my leisure;  
But the boat that I would steer  
Is the boat reflected where  
Sunlight first must shine to show it,  
And no earthly horse can tow it;  
And no ripple must disturb  
Garden wall and grassy kerb.  
But with these on the canal,  
Is there need to change at all?

At Gibney's, from the  
IXth Lock, Clondalkin.  
*April 1937.*

## LULLABY

WANDER no more, my Thoughts, but keep  
Within the moated realm of Sleep;  
Wander no more, nor further than  
The dusty wavering moth may span,  
With wings which love the hearth-low light  
With which the casement gilds the night;  
Wander no more!

Content you there to rest and dream,  
Nor watch the flickering armour gleam,  
For nothing that the past has done  
Need break your rest to ponder on,  
Nor yet the future's lordlier scope:  
Sleep is a sounder thing than Hope,  
Content you there.

So yield to dream, and feel the sway  
Of Earth upon the rainbow way;  
And dream you feel it lift and take  
A way you never felt awake;  
For O, unless your dreams outdo  
Your life, there is not much for you;  
So yield to dream.

On darkness launched, now you go forth  
Where there is neither South or North;  
Nor Now and Then, nor Here and There;

But something deeper than these are;  
So may you, when you reach that bourne,  
Be most reluctant to return,  
                    On darkness launched.

## THE EMPEROR'S DREAM

WHEN the internal dream gives out,  
I let my eyes wander about  
Amongst the gay and the grotesque  
Ornaments upon my desk,

Where books are set on end and stacked  
By Plato and by Homer backed;  
But, in the present mood preferred,  
I see my Chinese crystal bird:

A Phœnix maybe, who can say?  
That ship that, off Arabia,  
Sighted the Phœnix flying East,  
Its crew could tell about it best.

They did not need a second look;  
They knew it by the course it took;  
And who am I to disagree,  
When China sends it back to me

To sit before me carven clear,  
As if the very atmosphere  
Of regions where but dreams abide  
Was seized on and solidified

To crystal that shall last as long  
As Beauty gains from Art and Song,  
From those who bend to carve or sing,  
Their tribute to her flying wing?

Was ever artist more supreme  
To catch, to hold, to mould a dream,  
Year in, year out, day after day,  
And never to let a line go astray

Till undistracted, undeterred,  
He caught the seldom-flying bird;  
From solid air he craved its crest;  
And set it airy in its nest?

I send my thoughts across the skies  
Of regions where the Phoenix flies,  
Where Past and Present are as one,  
To bow before the Emperor's throne;

And seek the artist in the court,  
Where only such as he resort;  
And from these barbarous times and ways  
Offer my crude barbarian praise.

Before we meet, I shall be told  
How, one day in the days of old,  
The Emperor hearing what he did  
(For nothing's from the Emperor hid)

Commanded him to send a proof  
Of what on wing or fin or hoof  
He fashioned with such skill that, poor,  
His name yet reached an Emperor;

And that, when he had seen the bird,  
He paused, and solemnly averred:  
The crystal wings without a flaw  
Were those that in a dream he saw.

And how the artist with bowed head  
And eyes cast down, replied and said:  
That all that made for skill he owed  
To Him from Whom perfection flowed.

For in the Emperor's mind were held  
Art's emblems; and, if one excelled,  
Of those who mould, or carve or limn,  
His genius was due to him.

And that at this the Emperor laughed,  
Praising the master of a craft  
Which had so worthily enshrined  
Things hidden in an Emperor's mind.

We need not meet, since this is so:  
What every craftsman knows, we know:  
Before our work stands up complete,  
The Emperor must have dreamt of it.

And if we please the Emperor's whim,  
And perfectly produce his dream,  
Time can but turn the works of men  
Into an Emperor's dream again.

## PALINODE

TWENTY years are gone  
Down the winding road,  
Years in which it shone  
More often than it snowed;  
And now old Time brings on,  
Brings on the palinode.

I have been full of mirth;  
I have been full of wine;  
And I have trod the earth  
As if it all were mine;  
And laughed to bring to birth  
The lighter lyric line.

Before it was too late,  
One thing I learnt and saw:  
Prophets anticipate  
What Time brings round by law;  
Call age before its date  
To darken Youth with awe.

Why should you drink the rue?  
Or leave in righteous rage  
A world that will leave you  
Howe'er you walk the stage?  
Time needs no help to do  
His miracle of age.



A few years more to flow  
From miracle-working Time,  
And surely I shall grow  
Incapable of rhyme,  
Sans Love and Song, and so  
An echo of a mime.

Yet if my stone set forth  
The merry Attic blade's  
Remark, I shall have worth  
Achieved before Life fades:  
"A gentle man on Earth  
And gentle 'mid the Shades".

## TO DEATH

BUT for your Terror  
Where would be Valour?  
What is Love for  
    But to stand in your way?  
Taker and Giver,  
For all your endeavour  
You leave us with more  
    Than you touch with decay!

WIT AND SATIRE

## AFTER GALEN

ONLY the Lion and the Cock,  
As Galen says, withstand Love's shock.  
So, Dearest, do not think me rude  
If I yield now to lassitude,  
But sympathise with me. I know  
You would not have me roar, or crow.

## ON TROY

I GIVE more praise to Troy's redoubt  
For Love kept in, than War kept out.

## TO SOME SPITEFUL PERSONS

YOUR Envy pleases me and serves  
My fame by all your muttering talk,  
Just as the starling flock that swerves  
With shrieks aside, and shows the hawk.

Men will lift up the head to stare,  
Although it never stoop to strike,  
At that still pinion stretched on air,  
When all such chattering fills the dyke.

## TO A BOON COMPANION

If medals were ordained for drinks,  
Or soft communings with a minx,  
Or being at your ease belated,  
By heavens, you'd be decorated!  
And not Alcmena's chesty son  
Have room to put your ribbands on!

## TO THE MAIDS NOT TO WALK IN THE WIND

WHEN the wind blows, walk not abroad,  
For, Maids, you may not know  
The mad, quaint thoughts which incommode  
Me when the winds do blow.

What though the tresses of the treen  
In doubled beauty move,  
With silver added to their green,  
They were not made for Love.

But when your clothes reveal your thighs  
And surge around your knees,  
Until from foam you seem to rise,  
Like Venus from the seas . . .

Though ye are fair, it is not fair!  
Unless you will be kind,  
Till I am dead, and changed to AIR,  
O walk not in the wind!



## TO A MUSHROOM

No one sang thee, little fielding,  
Sang thy wondrous being and birth,  
Till to mute attraction yielding  
I first hymned thee here on earth.

Though I never saw thee start up,  
I have seen thee when thou wert  
Poised as with an hinder part up—  
Oh my sudden quaint upstart!

In the short grass by the fount-head  
Thou art found as free from rule  
As a faun, and unaccounted  
As a little boy from school.

Or a baby plump and ample,  
Whose exuberance was led  
By Silenus' bad example  
Till the bowl fell o'er his head.

Of all growing things the oddest;  
Only of a sudden seen  
Unexpected and immodest  
As above a stocking, skin!

Soft, I must entreat thee gently;  
For I can but do thee wrong,  
And but think inconsequently  
Who for daylight pitch my song.

Suns for thee must still illume an  
Arid waste beneath the sky,  
Wistful, cold and thwartly human  
And Augustan—even as I.

Darkness only does not flout thee  
When alone thou tak'st the light,  
And the silence floats about thee,  
Moon-loved dewy child of night.

Thine example shows quite clearly  
That the things we think deranged  
Would be most delightful merely,  
Merely if the scene were changed.

## THE NETTLE

A VERY pleasant hillside falls among  
Pines to the south, and in a greensward settles;  
And while we loitered there my Love was stung,  
My girl-Adonis on the thigh by nettles.  
O what a bore! I must sit down, said she;  
I cannot walk! . . . O darling, what's the matter?  
A nettle stung me where you must not see,  
Just where my stocking ends and thigh grows  
fatter.

But I will shut my eyes before it gets . . .  
And you shall guide me so I shall not miss it—  
Before the poison in your system sets,  
I'll press my lips and very gently kiss it.  
The little blister white upon the white  
Of sudden snow where violets were peeping  
Was reddened by the cure which set it right.  
Now if, years hence, you find they are not keeping  
My grave with all the reverence that is due  
To one whom Beauty's smile in Life elated,  
O, Busybody, trouble not! Can you  
Be sure the nettle waves to desecrate it?

## A PITHY PRAYER AGAINST LOVE

GODS, get me out of it!  
Spirits of Laughter  
Come to my aid now  
And exorcise it!  
O you, Priapus,  
Stand till you're skyward,  
Stand till you're all staff  
And cannot rise it!  
Let your preposterous  
Pole fall upon her:  
"That for her honour!"  
Let not a thought now  
Of comfort escape us:  
Think what in boisterous,  
Blowing Jack Falstaff,  
Shakespeare made Love look.  
Think how that cheerful  
Chiel Hippocleides  
Would this my fearful  
Passion disparage;  
Dancing incessantly,  
Dancing indecently,  
Danced, till he danced off  
A cure for all heart-aches  
(Dancing the cordax!),  
Danced, till his carriage

Displeased the bride's father;  
Dancing it further,  
He danced off his marriage;  
Danced to surmount his  
Fate with: *ὄν φροντῖς!*  
Teach me his courage.

# CAVALIER ACCENTS

## TELL ME NOW

SHE

TELL me now is Love's day done?  
Beauty as elect and rare  
As when towns were trampled on  
Lives to-day and takes the air.  
Yet no amorous Triumvir  
Throws the world and Rome away;  
No one swims Abydos' bay;  
Towns are not cast down, and none,  
None begets the Moon and Sun.

HE

Do not let him hear your taunt!  
Love's as strong to-day as when  
Walls could not endure his brunt,  
And he broke the Trojan men.  
He can do as much again;  
Do not doubt him for an hour,  
Tempt his pleasure, not his power;  
Danger gives him no affront,  
He is not cooled by Hellespont.

## BEGONE, SWEET GHOST

BEGONE, sweet Ghost, O get you gone!  
Or haunt me with your body on;  
And in that lovely terror stay  
To haunt me happy night and day.  
For when you come I miss it most,  
Begone, sweet Ghost!

But do not clothe you in the dress  
Whereby was young Actæon killed;  
He died because of loveliness,  
And I will die from that withheld,  
Unless you take on flesh, unless  
In that you dress!



## PERFECTION

By Perfection fooled too long,  
I will dream of that no longer!  
Venus, you have done me wrong  
By your unattainable beauty,  
Till it seemed to be my duty  
To belittle all the throng.  
I have found attraction stronger;  
I have found a lady younger  
Who can make a hard heart stir;  
Like an athlete, tall and slender,  
With no more than human splendour;  
Yet, for all the faults of her,  
Than Perfection perfecter.

Though she guards it, grace breaks through  
Every blithe and careless movement.  
What shall I compare her to?  
When she takes the ball left-handed,  
Speed and sweetness are so blended  
Nothing awkward she can do,  
She, whose faults are an improvement!  
If she only knew what Love meant  
I would not be seeking now  
To describe the curbed perfection  
Of all loveliness in action.  
Perfect she would be, I vow,  
With the mole above the brow!

## GAZE ON ME

GAZE on me, though you gaze in scorn;  
O Lady, fix on me those eyes,  
And then the darkness may be borne  
When two such glorious lights arise;  
For is there one, if stars shine bright,  
Who will not praise the dark of night?

As gloaming brings the bending dew,  
That flowers may faint not in the sun,  
So, Lady, now your looks renew  
My heart, although it droops adown;  
And thus it may unwithered be,  
When you shall deign to smile on me.

PERSONAL

## TO A FRIEND

If it be true that poets, as you say,  
Envisage in their verse and populate,  
By dreams that shall come true, the future state,  
I must be careful whom I shall portray  
Lest I sit down, forever and for aye,  
With the strange characters I celebrate.  
O awful thought: our Fancy is our Fate!  
(Let me erase some writings while I may!)

But one thing I am sure of, dear A. E.:  
I will confront the malcreated crew,  
Victims or merely subjects of my song,  
If I can reach the bourne where you shall be  
Creating kindness as you always do,  
And I may bring my fancy friends along.

TO A. E.  
GOING TO AMERICA

DUBLIN transmits you, famous, to the West.  
America shall welcome you, and we,  
Reflected in that mighty glass, shall see,  
In full proportion, power at which we guessed:  
We live too near the eagle and the nest  
To know the pinion's wide supremacy:  
But yours, of all the wings that crossed the sea,  
Carries the wisest heart and gentlest.  
It is not multitudes, but Man's idea  
Makes a place famous. Though you now digress,  
Remember to return, as, back from Rome,  
Du Bellay journeyed to his Lyrè home;  
And Plutarch, willingly, to Chæroneia  
Returned, and stayed, lest the poor town be less.

TO W. B. YEATS, WHO SAYS THAT  
HIS CASTLE OF BALLYLEE  
IS HIS MONUMENT

To stones trust not your monument  
To make a living fame endure.  
Who built Dun Angus battlement?  
O'Flaherty is forgotten in Auchnanure.

And he who told how Troy was sacked  
And what men clipt the lovely Burd,  
Had seven Mayors to swear, in fact,  
Their towns first heard his babbling word.

TO MY FRIEND  
THE RT. HON. LORCAN GALERAN

[A Great Householder]

MERIDIAN man, Enstomacher,  
For whom the whole world's fruits are fare,  
For whom all Life is but a Feast's,  
And all the world is filled with Guests!

Spread out the Board, dispense the cost,  
There's not a moment to be lost  
Until the Mystic Wine and Bread  
Are guzzled and engulleted!

Others on canvas spend their soul,  
You on the tablecloth and bowl;  
And as you fill proceed to quote  
What Shakespeare and Sam Johnson wrote.

We take our seats at your commands  
Upon the fare stretch forth our hands;  
And grow amazed, while grows the drinking,  
To hear your hobby is clear thinking.

Your table, like a moon silvern,  
Shows what a kitchen sun you burn,  
An alternating sun that heats  
The growing herbs and lowing meats.

O Tableland! O plain of Troy,  
Whereon we wage the wars of joy!  
You, Agamemnon to our force,  
Big-bellied as the Trojan horse!

Well marshalled by your genial roar,  
The servants massed in order pour  
The blood some thirsty summer shed,  
Now ten years rising from the dead.

Still from your cellars' costly glooms  
Each bottle like an Orpheus comes,  
And bends his golden neck till we  
Can all but clasp Eurydice.

A Victory plunges through the air.  
As well as Love, wine casts out fear!  
The butler's Marathon goes round,  
And still your friends orchestral sound.

The artists are in heart to join;  
There's scholarship in each sirloin:  
"Do you prefer it brown or red?  
What did you say that Shakespeare said?

"The book is somewhere on my shelves:  
Yes; God helps those who help themselves . . .  
Don't mind, my Friend, it's only froth,  
I like a dappled tablecloth!



"Wine should not make a man afeared.  
A chewing chin won't spoil your beard.  
Well, let your stomach fight it out  
Starvation's no soft cure for gout."

Thanks, thanks! For this (I won't refuse)  
Opens the lips of every Muse,  
Makes us expand, makes trouble cease  
And brings the broad Tiberian peace.

Magee no longer thinks alone,  
Clarke talks and rouses silent Hone,  
While booming through the mist is heard  
Responsible, the clear-thought word.

I cannot move, I will not speak  
Without Parnassus' second peak:  
The Friend to whom you oft refer,  
Your cousin dear and echoer.

Once you fill up the ravening Maw,  
There's not a doubt about the Law.  
Just cut that chicken through the girth,  
I'm battling here for peace on Earth!

But there's a thirst I cannot slake  
Till water-lilies drink a lake,  
For I must get inside the cup  
If I would drink what bears me up.

Once like your Body bulged the Earth  
Pear-shaped, before the Moon had birth.  
O keep your tropic waistcoat tight,  
Your Belly may fly off to-night!

And mounted to the heavenly dome  
Another Moon would light us home,  
Fair as the ocean shell that rose,  
And harvest-full and grandiose!

Born of your bounty, take my Song  
Redounding like a dinner gong,  
Translunary recorder pale  
Of how your guests you can regale.

Till all the Earth's volcanic heat  
Shall bear a better heart to beat,  
Fame shall not fail you, generous man,  
Magnificent meridian!

TO MY PORTRAIT  
BY AUGUSTUS JOHN

*"O infinite Virtue, comest thou through  
The world's great snare uncaught?"*

IMAGE of me according to John

Back from the world behind his brow,  
Back from the boulevards of his brain,  
My painted wraith, what ails you now?  
Whom have you met with or discerned;

Where have you bivouacked or lain,  
Who look like Cæsar late returned  
Exhausted from a long campaign?  
Where were the tropic fields you fought?

What hostels heard your jibes and jests?  
Alas! my wraith, you answer not;  
But on your face a pallor rests.

The opals of Elysian skies  
Such as he paints around his friends  
Are not reflected in those eyes,

In vain that coloured peace descends;  
And never in the meadows where

He sets his women great with child,  
And dew has calmed the atmosphere

And all the willowy light is mild—  
O never in his mind's Provence

Did you come by that look of yours!  
Some ecstasy of Love's mischance  
Undreamt of by the Troubadours,

Or message passionate or absurd,  
Has made you look as who should seek,  
And yet lose confidence in a word,  
And seem to think before you speak.  
Is it a warning? And, to me,  
Your criticism upon Life?  
If this be caused by Poetry?  
What should a Poet tell his wife?  
Whate'er it is, howe'er it came,  
No matter by what devious track  
My image journeyed, there is fame  
In that it has come surely back.

## TO AUGUSTUS JOHN

*These, though my tankard is  
Hung in the pantry  
Up like Silenus's,  
And from the chauntry  
Only dry memories  
Ring for the Muse:  
From my indignities  
Take, and excuse.*

WHEN you kept the gears in mesh  
Driving on through Lettergesh,  
And I kept not very far  
Behind you in another car—  
Not that I would cast a slur,  
No; but accidents occur,  
And your driving not your drawing  
Was what there might be a flaw in—  
Like a God a little cloud  
Held you, as with speed endowed  
You drove on through the divine  
Light of day above the shine  
Of the green and grapy sea,  
Whose translucent greenery  
Broke on crescent sands remote,  
Goldener than Helen's throat.  
For I never see a beach  
Sloped within a galley's reach  
But I think of sands afar  
And our Lady of the War,

Wondering how many spears  
Kept Love faithful for ten years;  
And you think me just a fool  
Of the sentimental school,  
You who revel in the quick  
And are Beauty's Bolshevik;  
For you know how to undress  
And expose her loveliness.

You are right, but I am wrong,  
To love ladies named in song?  
I who feel it like a duty  
To love the rare and difficult Beauty  
That danger never could forestall,  
And towers round about it all.  
What better than a far ideal  
To help us with the near and real?

Well! you need not rail at me,  
For you could not watch the sea,  
Nor the purple mountains drawn  
Like the neck of . . . . .;  
Nor the Hawk of Achill strung  
Like a cross-bow as he hung  
Half invisible in blue;  
All these things were lost to you.  
For your eyes were strictly glued  
On (a Yeatsian rhyme) the road,  
And the lake vibrating bright  
Just six inches to your right;  
And the goats so slow to fly

Till they looked you in the eye;  
And the dogs still missed at home  
That you "stood no nonsense from";  
Geese that never more may tell  
Who attempts their citadel—  
Geese that fledged Augustus John  
Till he seemed to be a swan,  
Steering through the clear ozone  
For a Leda of his own.  
Or a Viking who has steered,  
All blue eyes and yellow beard,  
To some unawakened isle,  
With a reassuring smile;  
Or the lion-eyed Sordello  
Mountain-met was just his fellow;  
Or the gifted Robin Hood,  
Driven from his sheltering wood.

Then we spread the things, Ah, me!  
You but tolerated tea,  
And the shallow lucubration  
Of a picnic conversation;  
Till—I hope I don't presume—  
Suddenly profoundest gloom  
Wrapped you as you gazed apart,  
And not one of us had heart  
To inquire what was the matter.  
So we kept our frantic chatter  
Up, to save an awful pause,  
Guessing what could be the cause

Of your sudden, silent mood,  
What in daylight made you brood.  
Could it be that vapour islands  
Made an "Evening in the Highlands"  
With the mountains in array,  
Or recalled "The Stag at Bay"  
And the gulf that is betwixt  
Those who hunt and hang it fixed?

Did your thoughts' unwelcome pageant  
Bring, perchance, your London agent?  
With his face and forehead numb,  
Eyes like an aquarium?  
Not by trifles such as these  
Was your heart deprived of ease.

Enough! There is no need to tell  
How I broke the gloomy spell,  
What I was inspired to give—  
By bread alone doth no man live,  
And water makes a man depressed:  
Maybe silence had been best.

*When my hawk's soul shall be  
With little talk in her,  
Trembling, about to flee,  
And Father Falconer  
Touches her off for me,  
And I am gone—  
All shall forgotten be  
Save for you, John!*



TO THE POET W. B. YEATS,  
WINNER OF THE NOBEL  
PRIZE 1924

[To Build a Fountain to Commemorate His Victory]

Now that a town of the North  
In which a discerning band  
Has caused your name to go forth,  
And lifted on high your hand  
Before all men on the Earth  
As a sign of a contest won;  
What should you do with your wealth  
But spill it in water and stone;  
With a Dolphin to scatter the spilth,  
To be for a sign when you're gone  
That you in the town of your birth  
Laboured and hewed at a cup  
To hold what the clear sky spills;  
Why should you not set it up  
Under the granitic hills?  
What did the Roman of old,  
After the Pyrrhic slaughter,  
But spend the hard-won gold  
To bring in the Sabine water?  
Gracious and bountiful men,  
Cæsars and Cardinals,  
Laid hold of the mountain treasure, and then  
Spilt it within the walls,  
For children to dabble and splash,

And break the bead at the brim;  
For sparrows to shudder and wash,  
And the Dolphin's freshet unlimn  
The Dolphin under its wave  
Till he seem to tumble and reel,  
For his back to a poet he gave,  
And he follows at Venus' heel;  
He comes from the depths at a song:  
O set him on high in his place;  
For he stands for what flows in the lovely and  
strong  
And a sign of the Julian race!

## BACK FROM THE COUNTRY

BACK from the country  
Ruddy as an apple,  
Looking ripe and rural  
As the maid a farmer seeks;  
Fresh as an apple  
Shining in the pantry,  
Back you came to Dublin  
Whom I had not seen for weeks:  
How I hid my laughter  
Fearing to offend you,  
Back from the country  
With your apple cheeks!

## PANURGE

[Emotional Humanity, the All-worker.  
A Note on Rabelais]

DESIRE that drives where Lust obscures,  
And Fear that wields a scourge,  
These, as the Master dreamed, are yours,  
Panurge.

Desire and Fear, the Masquers two,  
Who act with us and urge  
The Comedy we play with you,  
Panurge.

Not since the most pellucid air  
By the Illissus' verge  
Heard the loud peals of laughter rare,  
Panurge,

In lyric plenitude of joy,  
Like Clouds whose rains asperge  
The desiccations that destroy,  
Panurge,

Such laughter-lore as this was taught  
In which we mix and merge,  
O profligate and polyglot  
Panurge!

The meaning of the things we do:  
Is Life a dance or dirge?  
Depends upon the point of view,  
Panurge!

How can we reach, though sail be bent  
Beyond the horizon's verge,  
Those isles of your astonishment,  
Panurge?

Bring back the cannons' fearful crack;  
Your fright and plight and purge;  
The boar-cat Rodilardus, back  
Panurge.

Bring back the fornicating Friar;  
Let Sacred Strength resurge  
And rehabilitate Desire,  
Panurge!

## CHORIC SONG OF THE LADIES OF LEMNOS

[The Lemnians having killed their husbands, faced with the necessity of defending the Island, resolve to press the crew of the Argo which carries Hercules into marriage.]

STR. I.        WHO will marry Hercules?  
                 Tell me if you can.  
                 Who will catch his eye, and please  
                 The strong silent man?

                 Who will make a happy home,  
                 For duty and desire:  
                 In Summer tend the honeycomb,  
                 In Winter tend the fire?

ANTIS. I.     What exactly is the sense,  
                 And substance of your song?  
                 Is his strength in reticence;  
                 Or is he, silent, strong?

                 Often strong and silent men,  
                 With sorra much to say,  
                 Are with young and old women  
                 Winsome in their way.

EPOS. I.       'Tis the great Tirynthian groom,  
                 A boyo hard to parry!  
                 Rather ask the question whom  
                 Hercules will marry.

STR. II. Thus to speak as if no choice  
Were left is to disparage  
Us, who surely have a voice,  
And the half of marriage;  
To put the cart before the horse,  
The groom before the bride.  
It is for the girl, of course,  
Also to decide.

ANTIS. II. O look at him with his club,  
And his lion's fell!  
That's the lad who made the hub-  
Bub below in Hell!  
That which is the pirates' quest  
May be Hercules's:  
To carry off the buxomest,  
And marry whom he pleases!

EPOS. II. Praise him for his shoulders' breadth,  
Him who took the Town of Death,  
Took the triple Dog therefrom,  
And Alcestis to her home.  
Praise him, for he carries through  
All he sets himself to do;  
No one ever saw him chuck  
Anything he undertook;  
Softly talk of marriage, he  
Might embrace the colony;  
And if he were duly roused  
Who would then be unespoused?

# “ÆTERNÆ LUCIS REDDITOR”

[*To Robert Yelverton Tyrrell*]

OLD Friend, long dead, who yet can thrive  
More in my heart than men alive  
Because in you the flame lived more  
Than ever since the days of yore  
When, everywhere that Rome was known,  
The post-triumphal silence shone,  
And in the vespertinal hush  
The trumpet yielded to the thrush:  
Because those days you could restore  
Æternæ lucis Redditor.

You shared with us the mood serene  
That ruled the universal scene  
When Peace was guardian of the poor,  
And only rusty was the door  
Of Janus, and the pillared shade  
Revealed the studious colonnade:  
The toga with the purple hem,  
The temple that with quiet flame  
Acclaimed the distant Emperor,  
Æternæ lucis Redditor.

Too seldom on this world of ours  
Unwrackt the eternal radiance pours.  
Again we shall not see it pour  
As in the days and nights before



We lost the wide Virgilian calm;  
Days when we sought to earn the palm—  
Through the endowment of a wit  
Which made us eligible for it—  
From you who were Wit's arbiter,  
*Æternæ lucis Redditor.*

'Twixt you and me and me and those  
Irremeable the River flows  
Since we beheld with joy and awe  
The light by which blind Homer saw.  
And not again in this our time  
Shall sound magnanimous the rhyme;  
The wolves have torn our pleasant folds,  
And the Great Wall no longer holds.  
But Love can bridge the Stygian shore,  
*Æternæ lucis Redditor.*

## L I M E S T O N E   A N D   W A T E R

THIS is the rock whose colours range  
From bright to dark when wet with rain,  
Clear as an eye whose colours change  
From smoke-grey blue to dark again:  
This is the limestone base of earth  
From which the best things come to birth.

And the stream shallows where its walls'  
Smooth steep, which ivy pennons coat,  
Down from bare earth abruptly falls,  
And stands as if it stood in a moat;  
Above, a sapling shows its root:  
The wild stream darkens the cliff foot.

Out of this rock the stone was smashed  
That gave long beauty time to grow;  
The hammers rang, the chisels flashed:  
It answered back with fire the blow;  
And it gave gifts and guards enough  
From limestone to the Parian stuff.

Water and rock by warriors wed  
Here with the landscape well accord.  
They built beyond Time's ambushade,  
Builders and wielders of chisel and sword.  
So well they dealt with stone and stream  
Eternity deals well with them.

And where the grey sky turns to white,  
    Failing the limits of the land's  
Far-shining girdle, dark, upright,  
    The strong four-cornered tower stands;  
And nearer, where the grey sky lowers,  
The long green tunnels close on towers.

And here where Time has trampled down  
    The white-thorn bush and blurred the track,  
Up stands the steep unblunted stone  
    And brings the lance-straight ladies back,  
And lights again those eyes of theirs  
As brave as glints from young men's spears.

For not a thing that ever grew  
    To win Time's heart can Time forget:  
With clouds he blends the lichens' hue;  
    The mountains with the parapet;  
And crowns that tower's denizen  
Who had more than her share of men.

Wherever Life is made secure  
    Beauty is gardened to become  
As lovely as its walls are sure  
    Foundations fit for Beauty's home.  
And like long reaches, stilled by weirs,  
So Loveliness wastes not with years.

The castle by the shallow ford:  
In ruin, but the upright line  
Above the tangle keeps its word:  
In death the unbroken discipline!  
And O, what great well-being went  
To build the enduring battlement!

## NEW BRIDGE

NEW Bridge is the oldest bridge  
The Liffey passes through.  
There must have been an older bridge  
When this new bridge was new.  
But, new or old, the water flows  
In many a gleaming stage  
As careless as a thing which goes  
And is exempt from age.

So pleasant is it on this bank,  
I often wonder why  
They set the piers out rank on rank  
And raised the arches high.  
They must, deluded by a dream,  
Have thought, as I have done:  
The other side of any stream  
Is better than your own.

The water bends and thickens as  
It rushes at an arch.  
The piers like soldiers in a pass  
Stand halted on the march.  
The hissing stream escapes to fall  
In mocking undertones.  
But would it be a stream at all,  
Without the bridge and stones?

They built as men built who believed  
In Life that lasts forever.  
And hardly were those souls deceived  
Who bridged the clear black river?  
The soul survives, as any dunce  
Can prove: for it is plain  
That that which gets in trouble once  
Shall troubled be again.

I'd rather hear these arches praised  
Than arches anywhere.  
Not those the Eternal City raised  
To Settimo Severe;  
Nor those that leave the walls therefrom  
To tap the Sabine ridge  
Can match these arches here at home  
In Liffey's oldest bridge.

The black bright water over there  
Is flaked beside the brink,  
As if the stallions of Kildare  
Had bent down necks to drink.  
And underneath an arch I see  
A long grey gleaming reach,  
Half shadowed by a breeze, maybe,  
Or, maybe, by a beech.

The long grey lines of steel are gone  
Which crossed here long ago:

The colours, the caparison,  
All gone; and I would go  
But that I fear I might repent  
My going, if I found  
The side from which I willing went  
Looked better from beyond.

## I W O N D E R

I W O N D E R when will women know the glories they  
suggest to us:

If I were fit to sing to them of all that they inspire,  
Their dalliance to open up the Kingdom of the Blest  
to us

Would still be no less graced than hers who had a  
god to sire.

For queens they are, forgetful of the weight their  
brows has belted,

No longer crowned above us all by aching diadems;  
Some god put Lethe in the cup wherein the pearl was  
melted;

And golden heads have still to hear that Troy  
went down in flames.

It surely cannot be that I, alone of men, remember  
The old mad grandeur and the days of glory gone  
to waste;

Because here Beauty gleams as fair as boughs rimed  
in December,

And witless wears the ribands for which helmets  
were unlaced?

And yet they look as though none heard what for-  
tresses were wrecked for them.

What armies squandered, for a smile, the sister of  
all Force;



What waters turned to wells of wine when battle-  
ments were decked for them:

O why should I that Past recall which makes the  
Present worse?

It may be that our Present is for all the Past an  
Hades;

A parody of Kings and Queens, and Bounty's  
paradigm;

It may be Time's Magnificat must name no living  
ladies;

It may be that Forgetfulness excels a poet's rhyme.

# EUROPA AND THE BULL

[*To Arthur Train*]

"WHERE is little Wide Eyes?"  
"Where but in the farmyard."  
"Have I never told you  
To be careful of the child?"  
"Well, you would not think that  
There she would come harmward,  
If you saw the stallion tremble  
When she pats him, and grow mild."

"Nurse, it's not of danger  
From animals I'm thinking;  
Rather of a fashion  
Which of late has grown too rife:  
Girls of county families,  
Of men in my position,  
With grooms are so familiar,  
It's as bad as man and wife!

"And then there is this Never-to-be-  
Too-much deprecated  
Tendency towards bringing  
Only daughters up as boys;  
If the Queen were living,  
She would never tolerate it. . . .  
What's their masquerading  
To the magic it destroys!"

“Well I know that queer things  
Happen in the country:  
Nothing could be queerer  
Than a King to take his cue  
From his subjects’ families,  
Or pardon their effrontery  
Who dared to tell his daughter  
Or her Nannie what to do.”

“I, not unobservant,  
Nurse, have noticed anger  
Often used by women  
Who were not irascible,  
Out of mere resentment  
When they could no longer  
Argue a position  
Which had proved untenable.

“If your speech is ended,  
Listen, my good woman,  
Nothing is achieved by  
Incoherent talk:  
Tell her that the country  
Is an open farmyard,  
Wide Eyes will go with you  
And her maidens for a walk.

“Any distance inland  
Needs the stoutest buskin,  
Sandals are more suited  
To the firmly sanded shore;

No matter where you go to,  
Surely come by dusk in.  
I trust we need not talk about  
The farmyard any more."

\* \* \* \*

Dunes are here on this side,  
There, that piny headland;  
Midway, like a giant,  
Is that landward-leaning tree,  
Angry with the constant  
Briny-blowing West Wind,  
Poising up a shoulderstone  
To cast it in the sea.

Do you see that wave there,  
Where the crescent curves lift,  
Transilluminating  
For a second into green  
Miles of crystal daylight,  
Then, the hissing snowdrift:  
Light so water-tangled  
That its sightless self is seen—?

That is how the daylight,  
Barely vespertinal,  
Save but for a feeling  
That a moon was very near,  
Looked above the headland  
Of the sandy, sinal

Crescent, while it waited  
For a crescent in the air.

Taller than the tallest  
Of her young companions,  
Wide Eyes never wilted  
Where the broken ground begins:  
That's the Archer Goddess,  
With her bosom belted!  
No; it is a tomboy  
With the scratches on her shins!

Certainly unconscious  
That she was a maiden  
Who could fill with banners  
Frontiers of Kings!  
Once you saw her swinging  
From her youthful haunches,  
You would feel that manners  
Were not all-important things.

"If I raced you up there,  
Which of you could whistle?  
Just you watch me running  
When I get my second wind."  
Moulding in her short skirt  
Limbs to jump the thistle,  
A cry of wonder reached her  
From the little group behind.

Gambolling and charging,  
Low head shaken sideways,  
Swerving as though guided  
By his tassel rudder tail,  
Snorting more than stamping  
A ripple on the tideways,  
A Bull, where nothing ever  
Drew a furrow but a sail!

Eyes beneath a broad brow  
Widen with amazement,  
Not because the women  
Who were with her ran away;  
But because a bull used  
Water for a pavement.  
Down the fearless maiden went  
To meet him at the Bay.

White as any Maytree  
In the milky Maytime,  
Clothed about her middle  
With a dress as deep as haws,  
On the beach she waited  
In the silver of the daytime,  
A blurred green moon above her  
Like a May branch in the shaws.

Clear against the bright wall  
Of the low horizon

On the bull came, prancing,  
Lifting up his knees.  
He came on as gaily  
As a galley dancing  
While its sail is being lowered  
And the shouts are from the quays.

Like a man of Yorkshire  
Grunting after Christmas,  
When the curly foreheads  
And the appetites convene,  
White against the dark green  
Pines along the isthmus;  
He landed hardly wetted  
By his gambols on the brine.

Beating Heart of Nature  
What is it divorced us  
From your mighty pulses  
Throbbing into Sense!  
Sorra much the Hermit,  
Reason gives, who cursed us:  
Even Love goes ebbing  
From his deadly prescience!

Now he runs around her,  
Now he stands before her,  
Now his mighty breathings  
Tighten up her clothes;

Now he runs around her,  
Now he kneels before her,  
Now she pulls her instep  
From the spraying of his nose!

Who except a fool would  
Think he knew the mental  
Processes that act upon  
A widow, wife or maid?  
But the very sight of  
Strength becoming gentle—  
That is what they can't resist:  
A married man has said.

Not the alabaster  
Palaces of Minos  
Ever held a better  
Or a bull more quickly tamed:  
Glancing coat half ruffled  
Like a pool amid the spinous  
Dells of Ida's island  
For a hundred cities famed.

From his dewlap only  
Drops of water trickled,  
For she felt his back warm,  
Silky-soft and dry,  
And no common bull's hide!  
For it never tickled,  
When she held the strong beast  
Tight with either thigh.



Maybe, had she noticed,  
When she first went near him,  
That he had no halter  
Nor the ring he should have worn,  
She might have cast about her  
For another way to steer him:  
Bulls are ill directed  
When you take them by the horn.

Once he had her mounted,  
Even had she willed it,  
She could not have left him  
While the sea was yet below,  
But she held on lightly  
To the garlands on the gilded  
Horns, more blunt, but stronger  
Than the horns of buffalo.

Some wondered was she laughing at  
The bucketing and heaving  
Bull who tried her courage  
When he sent the waves aswirl;  
Some wondered was she sorry for  
The home that she was leaving:  
All talk! They only wondered  
What would happen to the girl!

Because the tales that suit me best  
Are tales without a moral,

Like this—unless at Harmony  
It hints in times afar,  
Before with all creation  
And ourselves we came to quarrel;  
Before the animals found out  
What animals we are.

Because I love the days in which  
Such miracles were common,  
Because I can suggest to you,  
So sceptical of all,  
(The mind provides the prodigy)  
That many a horsey woman  
Would welcome well such miracle  
When riding for a fall—;

Because the thoughts I dwell upon  
Would never pass a teacher  
Who maintains the World was made  
According to the word  
Of men who separate Mankind  
From Universal Nature—  
For what eloping god to-day  
Would turn into a Ford?

Because I hold an Age of Faith  
Whose dogma is emphatic  
Is happier than such as this  
When, if there's faith about,

'Tis not in gods by girls transformed,  
But Jewish mathematic,  
I go for Truth to Beauty  
Which is subject to less doubt.

So I see the White Bull  
As the water yellowed  
With the purple-vested  
Girl upon his back,  
Laughing when he dipt down,  
Laughing when he bellowed,  
Laughing when she dug her heels  
To goad him on the track.

Peace instead of panic now  
Where, long ago, erumpent  
Through the trance of quiet  
Of that farmstead with a roar—  
Sand instead of cities since—  
The Bull bore off triumphant  
That sweet and self-made burden  
From the blest Sidonian shore.

What about her father?  
Formal proclamation  
That it was her nurse's  
Fault was no excuse  
In the eyes of "County",  
Nor a consolation;  
But glory when the Church declared  
His son-in-law was Zeus!

## THRUSH IN ASH

BARE above the hedge, already  
Thick with leaf, the leafless ash  
Stands, resisting still the heady  
Spring's excited sudden flash;  
Like a deep reluctant lover  
Whose still heart is slow to love,  
But the more it takes to move her,  
When she loves, the more she'll . . . Hush!  
Coloured like his branchy cover,  
Ash-eye speckled sits a thrush.  
Lack of shelter little daunts him:  
If the branches lack their green,  
All the better may the mountains  
Through the leafless boughs be seen.  
You may count up five, or count tens  
In between his fangled notes,  
While the evening smooths the mountains  
And on silence music floats:  
Sweetly sudden knots in silence  
Like the way a violet shows,  
Interrupting green with sweetness  
Presently its purple glows,  
Like a drop of nectar taken  
From the cup that Hebe spilt;  
Dew fallen down from Ida, shaken  
When great Hera kicked the quilt.  
Lightly from the boughs ungreening  
Floats the light and lyric cheer,

Just a voice that takes a meaning  
From the place and those that hear.  
And the silence feeds his whistling  
As the evening lights the stars,  
Or my ear my fancy, listening  
To his interrupted bars.  
O my fancy stop your straining  
After subtile simile;  
Listen to the curled flakes raining  
From the song-bird in his tree;  
Cease to taint with mortal dreaming  
Such a liquid lovely song;  
Now the evening air is creaming,  
And the hills are smooth and long!  
Like the mountains which the Magi  
Seek beyond the starlit road  
When the Tuscan mixes magic  
On the painted oaken board,  
And you see smooth light pervade all  
Trees transfigured, leaves unstirred,  
And the mountains to a cradle  
Dwindle, cradling the Word.  
Here the ash-tree with a trellis  
Of its young boughs yet unblurred  
Screens the golden dusty valleys  
Stilled to hear the singing bird.  
Music: silence: silence aching,  
Till the few notes twisted clear,  
Lovely thoughtless music making,  
Lancinate the inmost ear;

Exquisitely thin and sweeter  
Than the high sharp sickle moon,  
Perfect, being incompleter  
Than a promise past and blown,  
Sounds that cease before enticing  
Thoughts and fetters of the word;  
Here is Sound for Song sufficing,  
Leafless ash and singing bird.

## APPLIED POETRY

ALL thoughts of you are joys  
And wistful fun!  
My heart is like a boy's,  
What have you done?

For I can no more think  
Of pounds and pence  
Just now than I can think  
With commonsense.

The leaves of forest glades  
Where you are seen  
Are still light yellow blades  
Before their green;

Each soaking meadow pool  
That's blurred with blue  
To me, who am a fool,  
The eyes of you!

The glistening breezes spilt  
Through aspen tops  
Where April kicks her quilt  
Of buttercups

And makes the meadow sway  
Its counterpane,—  
As if Doll Tearsheet lay  
And leapt again,

Are surely hints enough  
That sweet and sure  
Was he with "Youth's a stuff  
Will not endure".

So let us find a bank. . . .  
What's this? You won't?  
You think I mean to rank—  
Indeed I don't—

Doll Tearsheet with yourself,  
My dear, you're dull!  
How could a lanky elf  
Suggest a trull?

But she was meant to show  
(If Will gave lessons)  
That only women know  
The human essence,

And see beneath a part,  
Though clothed upon  
By Evil, the rich heart  
Of gross Sir John;

Which no one else perceived.  
When he was sickly,  
Who was it for him grieved  
But Doll and Quickly?



Significant and sad!  
But each descendant  
Of Adam, good or bad,  
Is Eve's dependant.

We are a sorry race  
Whose horoscope,  
Uncast by Woman's grace,  
Portends faint hope.

And now I find that he  
Who stole and cheated,  
Compared with honest me,  
Was kindlier treated. . . .

You used to love the Bard.  
Then more's the pity  
That now you disregard  
What's blithe and witty!

And play the Grandmamma,  
Aloof, sedate:  
"Our pleasant Willie, ah!  
Is dead in you of late!"

There! there! I don't suggest  
You are not fit to live  
Up to the very best  
That life in Art can give.

See, there's a bank that's fenced,  
Wherein, whereon  
Joy may be lodged against  
Oblivion;

And we hereafter, say  
That we of yore,  
One slanting sunny day  
Could do no more

Than make this gentle bank  
Joy's strong redoubt  
Which years may not outflank,  
Nor Memory flout.

"Well, to accomplish that  
What must we do?"  
"We must do something pat,  
Something Come-to."

Love can't be made by proxy,  
Lest faith in Love should fail.  
Heigh with the orthodoxy,  
Come with me o'er the dale!

The only way to capture  
What may not be expressed  
Is turn it into rapture  
Or turn it into jest.

So when you're old and fading,  
A Christian Scientist,  
Intent on self-persuading  
That Evil can't exist

And I, for all my slimming,  
Of somewhat stouter build,—  
"To Rescue Fallen Women"—  
Am Chairman of—The Guild. . . .

(My Dear, we can't eschew it,  
For Fate is farcical.  
The mighty poet knew it:  
There's Falstaff in us all.)

When, after much persuasion,  
In public we appear  
To grace a State occasion,  
Both you and I, my Dear,

Well honoured and respected,  
We meet our troops of friends:  
Since on the Undetected  
Respect so much depends,

I'll give you formal greeting  
And bow while whispering  
This spell: "My pretty sweeting!"  
To plunge our hearts in Spring;

For they, who hold together  
Half shares in Love's secret,  
Can conjure Spring, and tether  
The years that bring regret.

## SUB ILICE

Who will come with me to Italy in April?  
Italy in April! The cherries on the hill!  
The sudden gush of rivers where the valleys rib the mountains;  
The blue-green mists, the silence which the mountain valleys  
fill!

Is that Alba Longa? Yes; and there's Soracte.  
Soracte? Yes; in Horace: don't you "vides ut", you fool?  
No! She's not a model . . . you will have her husband on  
us! . . .  
Though her buttocks are far better than the Seven Hills of  
Rome!

Cherries ripe and mountains! Young wives with the gait of  
Goddesses; and feelings which you try in vain to say  
To the gay vivacious calculating native;  
If you knew Italian you would give the show away.

What is the attraction? Why are we delighted  
When we meet the natives of a race that's not our own?  
Is that which we like in them our ignorance about them;  
And we feel so much the better where we know we are not  
known?

Well, it does not matter. I am thinking of a stone-pine  
Where an Empress had her villa on the great Flaminian Way;

And the blond Teutonic students who have come so far for  
knowledge,  
And the fräuleins who come with them on a reading holiday.

If I met a tall fair student girl from Dresden,  
Whiter than a cream cheese, credulous, and O  
Earnest, and so grateful for the things that I might teach her,  
And I took her touring, would she have the sense to go?

I would through a ringlet, whisper . . . "This is Virgil's  
Confiscated farmstead which his friend in Rome restored.  
The Mastersinging races from the North came down here  
merging;  
And your hair was heir to colour that great Titian preferred.

How my pulses leap up! I can hardly curb them,  
Visiting the places which a poet loved. . . . Ah, well!  
Never fear the nightfall. . . . Veniemus urbem!  
My friend can take our taxi and go look for an hotel."

Here between the last wave of the hills subsiding  
And the river beeches which are growing bald with age,  
Gentle as the land's rise, lofty and abiding,  
Rhythm's mountain ranges rose to sunshine from his page.

" 'Is this Virgil's birthplace?' " Scholars are uncertain—  
You cannot be a scholar if a thing is too well known—  
There's the Idylls' ilex: if we use it for a curtain,  
You can sit on half my raincoat and my half will be a throne.

"Virgil was Menalcas: let me call you Phyllis.  
Now look up the Idyll where they tried what each could do:  
There! 'Vis ergo inter nos', and 'turn about's', 'vicissim';  
My pipe though not wax-jointed yet can play a tune or two."

\* \* \* \*

Friends, you must forgive me for this utter nonsense.  
To-day I saw an ilex where the Dodder streels along;  
And that togaed exile made me so despondent  
That I called the light and glory which it shadows into song.

Thwart in the world I control are many seasons,  
Many climes and characters obedient to a spell;  
I turn to human grandeur's most exalted voice for reasons,  
And not the least, that Virgil led a soul estranged from Hell.

## NEW FORMS

I GATHERED marble Venus in my arms,  
Just as the rabble crowded on the stair.  
I said, For her the sea gave up its storms;  
And gently on her body breathed the air.  
Alas, she fell, and broke to many pieces:  
Discovered later by a Professor,  
He cried, "New forms, new forms!" And  
wrote a thesis.



## W O M E N

WOMEN are our subconscious selves,  
Materialisations from our souls'  
Regions where fairy queens and elves  
Disport beyond Reason's controls.  
Remember, if you call them fools  
Who go, like dreams, by contraries,  
That Spirits may scoff at earthly rules:  
That you were born of one of these.  
What else explains their vagaries  
Unless this theory be truth,  
That women are the Dryades  
Of the lost orchards of our youth?

## TO NINDE

O YOUNG and lovely! Now I'm left  
With old ideals gone;  
Bereft of power to praise, bereft  
Of high comparison.

When Helen first put up her hair,  
She may have looked like you;  
Or Dian holding back a tear  
When her first fawn she slew.

There's not a limb in Melian land,  
Or veiled by Coan seas,  
Which lissom chisel planed; or planned  
By rapt Praxiteles,

To match you from your folded feet  
To little lifted chin,  
A line of perfect limbs which meet;  
And not a beam gets in!

But when there is not for the eye  
An equal in the heart,  
The outer vision fades; so I,  
To find your counterpart,

Call back the loveliness to aid  
Which stars my world of song:  
Ladies whom Time has lovelier made,  
And think of them when young.

But what are planets when the bright  
New crescent, tall and shy,  
Tip-toes across the orchard light  
Which tinges half the sky?

TO "APHRODITE"

VENUS I called you when our love began:  
And I was right; and you Pandemian.

## LEDA AND THE SWAN

THOUGH her Mother told her  
Not to go a-bathing,  
Leda loved the river  
And she could not keep away:  
Wading in its freshness  
When the noon was heavy;  
Walking by the water  
At the close of day.

Where between its waterfalls,  
Underneath the beeches,  
Gently flows a broader  
Hardly moving stream,  
And the balanced trout lie  
In the quiet reaches;  
Taking all her clothes off,  
Leda went to swim.

There was not a flag-leaf  
By the river's margin  
That might be a shelter  
From a passer-by;  
And a sudden whiteness  
In the quiet darkness,  
Let alone the splashing,  
Was enough to catch an eye.

But the place was lonely,  
And her clothes were hidden;

Even cattle walking  
In the ford had gone away;  
Every single farm-hand  
Sleeping after dinner,—  
What's the use of talking?  
There was no one in the way.

In, without a stitch on,  
Peaty water yielded,  
Till her head was lifted  
With its ropes of hair;  
It was more surprising  
Than a lily gilded  
Just to see how golden  
Was her body there:

Lolling in the water,  
Lazily uplifting  
Limbs that on the surface  
Whitened into snow;  
Leaning on the water,  
Indolently drifting,  
Hardly any faster  
Than the foamy bubbles go.

You would say to see her  
Swimming in the lonely  
Pool, or after, dryer,  
Putting on her clothes:

“O but she is lovely,  
Not a soul to see her,  
And how lovely only  
Leda’s Mother knows!”

Under moving branches  
Leisurely she dresses,  
And the leafy sunlight  
Made you wonder were  
All its woven shadows  
But her golden tresses,  
Or a smock of sunlight  
For her body bare.

When on earth great beauty  
Goes exempt from danger,  
It will be endangered  
From a source on high;  
When unearthly stillness  
Falls on leaves, the ranger,  
In his wood-lore anxious,  
Gazes at the sky.

While her hair was drying,  
Came a gentle languor,  
Whether from the bathing  
Or the breeze she didn’t know.  
Anyway she lay there,  
And her Mother’s anger

(Worse if she had wet hair)  
Could not make her dress and go.

Whitest of all earthly  
Things, the white that's rarest,  
Is the snow on mountains  
Standing in the sun;  
Next the clouds above them,  
Then the down is fairest  
On the breast and pinions  
Of a proudly sailing swan.

And she saw him sailing  
On the pool where lately  
She had stretched unnoticed,  
As she thought, and swum;  
And she never wondered  
Why, erect and stately,  
Where no river weed was  
Such a bird had come.

What was it she called him:  
Goosey-goosey gander?  
For she knew no better  
Way to call a swan;  
And the bird responding  
Seemed to understand her,  
For he left his sailing  
For the bank to waddle on.



Apple blossoms under  
Hills of Lacedæmon,  
With the snow beyond them  
In the still blue air,  
To the swan who hid them  
With his wings asunder,  
Than the breasts of Leda,  
Were not lovelier!

Of the tales that daughters  
Tell their poor old mothers,  
Which by all accounts are  
Often very odd;  
Leda's was a story  
Stranger than all others.  
What was there to say but:  
Glory be to God?

And she half believed her,  
For she knew her daughter;  
And she saw the swan-down  
Tangled in her hair.  
Though she knew how deeply  
Runs the stillest water;  
How could she protect her  
From the winged air?

Why is it effects are  
Greater than their causes?

Why should causes often  
Differ from effects?  
Why should what is lovely  
Fill the world with harness?  
And the most deceived be  
She who least suspects?

When the hyacinthine  
Eggs were in the basket,—  
Blue as at the whiteness  
Where a cloud begins;  
Who would dream there lay there  
All that Trojan brightness;  
Agamemnon murdered;  
And the mighty Twins?

## R E L E A S E

[*To Calypso*]

Not fixed is worship as I thought  
When first your pride I faced,  
But by some wonder heaven-wrought  
May be at once displaced.

The heart to one ideal tied  
May be released one day;  
One day the Messenger, espied  
Above Pieria,

Shall stoop; and, as he skims and dips—  
Each sandal's golden fin  
Fanning the violet water tips  
To rainbows as they spin—

Come with the order from above;  
And, like Odysseus, free,  
I for a human-hearted love  
Again shall risk the sea!

## FAITHFUL EVEN UNTO FREUD

EVEN judged by dreams which are  
But phantasmal parodies  
Of my life; and hollower  
Than the glory of the skies  
Which the seven maids maintain,  
Heavenly sisters of the rain,

I am true. If you came in  
To the Liberties of Sleep  
Where, as proud as Saladin,  
A preposterous state I keep:  
Would you ever guess each bride  
Was your own self multiplied?

Where, by water-lilies stilled,  
Some forgotten old canal  
Mirrors deep a window-silled  
Maiden in a castle wall,  
You again: but no disguise  
Warms your willow-greenish eyes.

To a place where engineers  
Coax a stream to climb a hill  
And in marble reappears  
Mountain-melted snowy still  
Water, as before the Moor  
Laid it on his rose-leaf floor,

I am banished beyond time,  
To my faith an infidel,  
Ruling in another clime  
Devotees who serve me well,  
Moving as they seek my love  
Hips that like twin melons move.

With my boat's three-cornered sail  
Shaped as is a rose's thorn,  
While the morning yet is pale,  
Gently filling, I am borne,  
Where . . . it is not every man's  
Luck to meet Corinthians.

Aphrodite's house is there;  
She knows what you drove me to.  
The most pleasant form of prayer  
That a worshipper can do  
Was enjoined. But nothing cures  
Love the loved one still abjures.

## D O M I

THIS is the house where I lie down  
At length to call the world my own;  
And no one spies on what goes on.

This is the house that cannot yield:  
Who built it knew well how to build.  
None trespasses across my field;

Nor comes betimes because he thought,  
If late, I might be up and out;  
Here I am safe from fools like that.

The light is not as, shall we say,  
The diamond dome above the Bay  
When light looks black at topmost day;

Nor such as, ere the sun is set,  
Shines level where the boughs are wet,  
And it is early April yet.

No, I acknowledge it is dim;  
But all the more tempered for him  
Who has seen all that life could limn.

Before I took this holiday,  
I often heard companions say:  
"I would that I were well away".

And well away from all turmoil,  
And well away from all the coil  
Of anxious engaging toil.

Tiber and Nile and Thames of course  
Raise lordlier walls to men of force:  
But this becomes a man of verse.

You must not judge by my retreat  
That I found Life not wildly sweet,  
Or that I turn my back to it.

'Twas pleasant as I saw it played.  
But why should one whose looks grow staid  
Hang on unto the harlequinade?

It needs no skill to be prepared  
For the long solitude unshared:  
Hither my old grandmother fared.

TO EDWARD MORETON DRAX  
18TH BARON DUNSANY

*To ward off Time's abuses  
The name is set above,  
By one who loves the Muses,  
Of one the Muses love.*



## FAREWELL TO THE PRINCESS

I who had your love  
Have now my pride;  
And that is worthy of  
All love denied.  
Times change; but long ago  
Men stood no suffering  
That came from one alone.  
I heard a poet sing;  
And I make bold  
To say 'Twould take a crowd  
Of such as you  
To bring me down,  
I am so proud:  
And if you multiply  
New loves, so I.  
He declared it took  
Two fans in double yoke  
To moider one,  
Two fans, before his broke;  
And three shy fans before  
The man who studied war,  
The Mandarin  
Of T'sow gave in;  
And twenty ladies to undo  
The Duke of Ting,  
The Lord of Lu.

## A L A S !

I LOST my Love,  
I lost my Love  
Because she came too rich to me.  
How could I dream  
Her need was of  
A love as rich again from me?

And now her dear  
Dark eyes light up;  
Her hands caress another's hair.  
For me there is  
Not any hope;  
But thoughts that, O,  
Enrich Despair!

## TO JAMES STEPHENS

WHERE are you, Spirit, who could pass into our  
hearts and all

Hearts of little children, hearts of trees and hills, and  
elves?

Where is the pen that could, sweetly deep and  
whimsical,

Make old poets sing again far better than themselves?

You passed through all our past worst time, and  
proved yourself no caitiff.

America then listened to a voice too dear for wealth;  
Then you went to London, where I fear you have  
"gone native";

Too long in a metropolis will tax a poet's health:

It's not as if you had no wit, and cared for recognition;  
tion;

A mind that lit the Liffey could emblazon all the  
Thames,

But we're not ourselves without you, and we long for  
coalition;

Oh, half of Erin's energy! What can have happened,  
James?

## AND SO ON

Was there ever Beauty yet  
Time forgot to counteract?  
If by Sorrow unbeset,  
Did her city go unsacked;  
Nor some accident disguise  
The Immortals' jealousies?

Beauty never comes on earth  
But an equal Grief is born;  
Hidden, maybe, in the dearth  
Of the hours ere the morn;  
Or that in her core are strife,  
Gain of Love and loss of Life.

This is nothing new at all:  
We have heard it all before:  
Beauty one side of the Wall,  
On the other side, the War.  
Love and Death; and no denying  
These things do not end by dying.

## DEATH MAY BE VERY GENTLE

DEATH may be very gentle after all:  
He turns his face away from arrogant knights  
Who fling themselves against him in their fights;  
But to the loveliest he loves to call.  
And he has with him those whose ways were mild  
And beautiful; and many a little child.

TO SHADU 'L - MULK  
[Delight of the Kingdom]  
from the Persian of Khalil Shah

My Loved One has another  
And a nameless paramour  
Which causes me no bother,  
For she loves me all the more.

Thus for the dam's rebellion  
The ostlers often try her  
With a jackass, till the stallion  
Strikes the cobbles into fire.

## CONNEMARA

West of the Shannon may be said  
Whatever comes into your head;  
But you can do, and chance your luck,  
Whatever you like West of the Suck.

There's something sleeping in my breast  
That wakens only in the West;  
There's something in the core of me  
That needs the West to set it free.

And I can see that river flow  
Beside the town of Ballinasloe  
To bound a country that is worth  
The half of Heaven, the whole of Earth.

It opens out above the town  
To make an island of its own;  
And in between its sky-blue arms  
The grass is green as any farm's.

As often as I take the road  
Beyond the Suck, I wish to God  
That it were but a one-way track  
Which I might take and not come back.

The very light above the bay,  
The mountains leaping far away,  
Are hands that wave through homely air,  
To make me shout "I'll soon be there!"

It is not everyone gets on  
Where dwell the Seaside Sons of Conn;  
It is not everyone that's wanted  
Where things are apt to be enchanted:

Where you may see if you look out  
The hills and clouds tumbling about;  
But suddenly the fun may stop  
Until they find to what you're up.

You are supposed to understand  
What brings the sea so far inland;  
And why the water-lilies be  
Close to the gold weed of the sea.

You must not ask what kind of light  
Was in the valleys half the night,  
Now that you are beyond Beyonds  
Where night and day were tied by bonds.

And if you see with half an eye  
Two lovers meet, O pass them by!  
Remember that the Others' do  
As you have done by them to you.

And never ask the rights or wrongs  
When mountains shake with battle-songs;  
Because the Fight surpasses far  
The things which merely lead to war.



The light is thronged as is the dark;  
But here the wise make no remark:  
For if it comes to comments on  
The glory, then the prime is done.

The lanes that end on hill or strand  
Of this, the Many Coloured Land,  
Are dearer than the burdened roads  
That cross the Lands of Many Loads.

It's here that I get out to walk;  
The Shannon's there for you that talk;  
But I can only work my will  
Where mountains leap and clouds lie still.

## P R A I S E

Why should I hold my praise  
To wait for better days?  
The best of times is now;  
And this is good enough:  
For Youth is at its best,  
Youngest and loveliest,  
Full of the sapling stuff;  
And so are you.

We shall not in the flesh  
Ever again be as fresh,  
With courage quite so stout.  
Never shall I surprise,  
Never with more delight,  
The little mist of light  
As if your soul shone out  
Before your eyes.

Roses and snow betoken  
Your words before they're spoken;  
Nothing can be more small,  
Nothing more fair unless  
The smile that makes them glisten . . .  
O bear with me and listen!  
The fact remains for all  
Your humbleness!

The poplar never stoops,  
The gentle willow droops,  
Your walk holds both of these.  
The movement of your hips  
Has so much buoyance in it . . .  
"Be silent!" Just a minute . . .  
It makes me think of ships  
Upon far seas.

Now let me have my say  
In my own lyric way;  
And then you may not frown.  
My song is half a ruse  
To praise myself in you,  
Silence would never do,  
It cost a man his Muse  
When Rome went down.

Never shall it be said  
Of me when I am dead:  
He had too tardy sense  
Of Beauty. Though your frowns  
Are all my thanks, I tried  
To sing of lovely pride;  
There are no laurel crowns  
For reticence!

## GOOD LUCK

APPLES of gold the Hero dropt  
As he was in the race outstript;  
And Atalanta, running, stopt,  
And all her lovely body dipt  
A moment; but she lost her stride—  
And had to go to bed a bride.

And was it not a cordial strong,  
By which the young Iseult was filled  
With passion for a whole life long;  
For that was what the juice instilled?  
So he who kept the unwitting tryst  
Was sure of love before he kissed.

But where can I get Western gold,  
Or posset of constraining fire?—  
I who am fated to behold  
Beauty outdistancing desire?  
Aye, and to falter wonder-struck;  
There's no good love without good luck!

## THE CASTING

I POUR in the mould of rhyme  
All that my heart would hold:  
The transient light on the tower,  
The moat in its wintry gold,  
Sunlight, and a passing shower,  
The gleam of your garments' fold  
That baffles the eye as you pass,  
Formless and lovely things  
Like speech that breaks in a laugh;  
To leave them a shape with wings,  
And Time but a cenotaph.  
I heat them with more than heat,  
Because they must glow in the cold;  
I puddle the white-hot mass,  
And praying with words retold,  
To temper Beauty from Time,  
I pour them into the mould.

## THE OAK WOOD

You could not see a linnet's wing  
Between the oaks that wait for Spring,  
Because the air is green and dim  
With mosses on each bole and limb.

But soon they'll tingle in the blue  
And all their amber joy renew;  
And transubstantiate to wood  
The Spring's impalpable blue blood.

And they will drain, ere time be past,  
From Beauty gall to make them last  
To gaze on many a festive sight:  
The wedded heir, the ruddy light.

## DUNSANY CASTLE

THE twin dunes rise before it, and beneath  
Their tree-dark summits the Skene river flows,  
An old divine earth exaltation glows  
About it, though no longer battles breathe.  
For Time puts all men's swords in his red sheath,  
And softer now the air from Tara glows;  
Thus in the royallest ground that Ireland knows  
Stands your sheer house in immemorial Meath.

It stands for actions done and days endured;  
Old causes God, in guiding Time, espoused  
Who never brooks the undeserving long.  
I found there pleasant chambers filled with song,  
(And never were the Muses better housed)  
Repose and dignity and Fame assured.

## DEDICATION

TALL unpopular men,  
Slim proud women who move  
As women walked in the islands when  
Temples were built to Love.  
I sing to you. With you  
Beauty at best can live,  
Beauty that dwells with the rare and few,  
Cold and imperative.  
He who had Cæsar's ear  
Sang to the lonely and strong.  
Virgil made an austere  
Venus Muse of his song.



## COLOPHON

WHILE the Tragedy's afoot,  
Let us play in the high boot;  
Once the trumpets' notes are gone,  
Off, before the Fool comes on!

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